Adopted by the World:
China and the Rise of Global Intimacy

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the histories of international adoption and child sponsorship in China from the 1930s to the 1950s to illustrate China's crucial but unrecognized role in shaping the politics and practices of global humanitarianism. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Chinese child welfare organizations developed a new form of humanitarian fundraising in which private citizens across the world "adopted" Chinese children by funding their lives at orphanages in China. Under the adoption model, Chinese children and their foreign "foster parents" built personal relationships through the exchange of photographs, gifts, and translated letters that used familial terms of address. The relationships forged between children and their foster parents constituted a new mode of affective and material exchange across national, racial, and cultural boundaries that I call "global intimacy." At the same time, the adoption plan was also deeply ideological, embedding the relationships between children and their sponsors within the politics of WWII and the Cold War. At once emotional and economic, humanitarian and political, the adoption plan transformed the emotional loyalties of children into a key battleground on the affective terrain of these global conflicts.

The emergence of the adoption plan as one of the most successful methods of humanitarian fundraising in China precipitated a broader "intimate turn" in global humanitarian practice. During WWII, Chinese child welfare organizations developed new discursive and material practices—as well as new global administrative structures—that made the adoption of Asian children into a distinct form of humanitarian rescue. After the war, an American

organization called China's Children Fund utilized the rhetoric of Christian love to transform the adoption plan into one of the largest humanitarian programs in Asia, systematizing the transnational flow of gifts and letters to create a paradoxical bureaucracy of global intimacy. When the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, rather than dismiss the adoption plan as a tool of the reactionary Nationalist Party and their American imperialist allies, they instead sought to transform it into a centerpiece of a new form of "revolutionary humanitarianism." However, during the Korean War the CCP ultimately decided to dismantle all foreign humanitarian institutions in China, leading transnational aid organizations to again remake the adoption plan as a lynchpin of a new "Cold War humanitarianism" across East Asia.

"Adopted by the World" sheds light on the global history of humanitarianism, the intertwining of intimate relations and international relations during the WWII and Cold War eras, and the political significance of children in modern Chinese history. By analyzing how Chinese child welfare institutions utilized children's letters to mold international opinion of China, I show how children were enlisted as key actors within the political campaigns of both the Nationalist and Communist parties. Engaging with recent scholarship that has argued that the provision of global humanitarian aid served the Cold War foreign policy interests of Western powers, this dissertation explores how the recipients and critics of humanitarian aid in China both shaped and challenged the post-WWII global humanitarian order.

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It is too early to know whether I found my life's vocation in graduate school. But I did find my life's partner. To Sau-yi Fong, for everything, I am forever grateful.

INTRODUCTION

Feng-ming's path to the Yu Tsai School was as tortuous as it was tragic. Born in Jiangsu Province, China, in October 1934, both of her parents died during the War of Resistance Against Japan when she was only a small child, and several years later her older brother died of tuberculosis. Orphaned and alone, she was adopted by a cousin's friend who forced her to perform hard labor and beat her daily. Feng-ming managed to escape back to her cousin's home, where she hoped to earn her keep by helping with chores while studying at the local night school. But her cousin objected to her attending the school and even threw away her books. Finally, Feng-ming was "saved" when the school's headmaster arranged for her to study dance at the Yu Tsai School, a prestigious arts school in the northern suburbs of Shanghai. It was the fall of 1948. She was thirteen years old.[1]

All of Feng-ming's expenses at the Yu Tsai School were paid by the China Branch of an international child welfare organization called Foster Parents Plan for War Children ("PLAN China Branch"). Opened in 1947, the PLAN China Branch supported children through a humanitarian fundraising strategy known as the "adoption plan for international child sponsorship." Under the adoption plan, foreign "foster parents" could "adopt" individual Chinese children by paying for them to live in child welfare institutions in China while exchanging photographs, gifts, and translated letters that used familial terms of address. Similar adoption programs had been operating in China since the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan in 1937, and they had quickly emerged as among the most successful fundraising strategies for humanitarian work in China. The PLAN China Branch assigned an American woman named Joy as Feng-ming's foster mother, and for the next eight months Joy and Feng-ming

[1] Case File #C211, Box 47, Folder 42, *FPP*.

corresponded regularly. Joy even sent Feng-ming numerous gifts including pictures, books, and a dress and skirt that turned out to be just her size. Then, on April 19, 1949, the PLAN China Branch sent Joy a letter informing her that Feng-ming had left the program:

> We know that for Feng-ming's sake you will be pleased to learn that she has now left Plan care since she has found work which she believes will help her greatly; even more than her school work, and so she is very thankful to you for all that you have done in her behalf and now she will make it possible for another child to be taken into Plan in her place.[2]

Perhaps Joy was pleased, as the letter suggested she should be, to read that Feng-ming had found meaningful work. Or perhaps she was angry that Feng-ming had been permitted to drop out of school at the young age of fourteen. Almost certainly, Joy never expected that she would hear from Feng-ming again.

So it must have come as quite the surprise when in November 1949, six months since she had last heard word of Feng-ming, Joy received a long letter from Feng-ming herself. Full of shocking revelations, dramatic tales, and one piece of tragic, life-altering news, the letter explained where Feng-ming had actually been those past six months, why she could not write sooner, and why she desperately desired to get back in touch now.

> Dear Joy:
>
> I have not been able to write to you for almost six months. I miss you a lot. I left here this February…for the [Communist] guerilla territory of the Chekiang Province. I went with many other schoolmates of mine. When we reached there, we organized a cultural workers' corps…I was then responsible for the instruction of dancing and other performances. We were requested to go, for there were very few who could dance. When we left the school, Shanghai was still under the [Nationalist Party's] reactionary rule, and the people of Shanghai were all leading a most stifling life…Countless numbers of youths were then massacred by the reactionaries, especially on the eve of the liberation of Shanghai. That was why we had to sneak away in secret. I hope this can serve to explain why I failed to inform you.[3]

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[2] Letter from Gerald Tannebaum, April 19, 1949, Box 47, Folder 42, *FPP*.

[3] Letter from Feng-ming, November 9, 1949, Box 115, Folder 86, *FPP*.

The Yu Tsai School had long maintained ties with the underground Communist Party in Shanghai, and in the spring of 1949 it sent several of its older students, including Feng-ming, to Communist-held territory in Zhejiang ("Chekiang") Province to form a "cultural workers' corps" to travel with its guerilla fighters. Feng-ming's letter went on to describe the arduous but meaningful life she found among the Communist soldiers:

> Dear Joy, the liberation of China needs the effort of every one of us. Hence it is also my duty to go to join in the people's service. Although I am yet young, but I work extremely hard all the same. When I was engaged in guerilla warfare in the hills, I had to walk seventy to eighty 'li' of hill path all on foot, each day. Yet I never felt tired.

It was only at this point of her lengthy letter that Feng-ming divulged the tragic reason why she was once again writing to her former foster mother:

> I have been detected through fluoroscope inspection, to be serious infected with heart disease. My heart is already suffering from some swelling. The doctor warned me against further dancing. I have been told to take a long rest, without making myself the least tired. That is why I have come back to the school...Dear Joy, is there any hope for one who is attacked by heart disease? What agony it was, when I heard that I was unable to dance any more. You never know how I love dancing. It is really a part of my life. However I sincerely believe that I will become better someday. I shall again write to you with a happy heart, when that day comes. Dear friend, I wish that you could allow me to continue to be a friend of yours, and let me keep on writing to you. I wonder if you would consent. This is the only thing that I want of you.

Feng-Ming's letter was one of thousands that Chinese children wrote to their American foster parents during the tumultuous period surrounding the Chinese Communist revolution of 1949. In that year, Mao's Zedong's Communist Party defeated Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party in what had been a protracted civil war. The United States had supported the Nationalists, and many regarded the Communists' victory as a dramatic defeat for the United States in the emerging Cold War.[4] Against this global political backdrop, Feng-ming and many other Chinese

[4] On the intertwined politics of the Chinese Civil War and the emerging U.S.-Soviet Cold War, see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 17-48 and Niu Jun,

children wrote to their American foster parents with deeply personal stories of the Chinese Communist revolution—stories that were strikingly different from what their foster parents might have encountered in the American press.

Between the lines of the intimate revelations about her disease, despair, and desires, Feng-ming's letter narrated for Joy the story of the revolution as refracted through the experiences of one girl, a girl for whom Joy had already come to care deeply. In Feng-ming's dramatic account, the U.S.-supported Nationalists had oppressed and massacred countless children—the very children Joy and Americans like her had "adopted." On the other hand, the Chinese Communist guerillas had provided her with refuge, purpose, and a chance to pursue her passion for dance. We do not know how, or even whether, Joy responded to Feng-ming's letter. But especially considering her emotional and monetary investment in Feng-Ming, it is possible that the letter prompted Joy to reconsider what she knew—or thought she knew—about China and its revolution.

This dissertation examines the histories of international adoption and child sponsorship in China from the 1930s to the 1950s to illustrate China's crucial but unrecognized role in shaping the politics and practices of global humanitarianism. The outbreak of full-scale war between China and Japan in July 1937 transformed the plight of Chinese children into an international *cause célèbre* and ushered in a new era of humanitarian work in China. In this context, Chinese child welfare organizations such as the National Association for Refugee Children ("NARC") utilized the adoption plan to fundraise internationally for desperately needed child relief work in China. In the aftermath of WWII, transnational child welfare agencies, many of them founded by American missionaries, began utilizing the adoption plan to fundraise for their own child

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Lengzhan yu Xin Zhongguo Waijiao de Yuanqi, 1949-1955 冷戰與新中國外交的緣起 [The Cold War and the Origin of Diplomacy of People's Republic of China] (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2013), 26-131.

welfare institutions in China and across East Asia—where they also helped facilitate the rise of legal international adoption in Japan and Korea. Among the most politically controversial and culturally significant humanitarian programs in Cold War East Asia, international adoption and child sponsorship remain prominent forms of humanitarian rescue and transnational family formation across the world today.

The relationships formed between Chinese children and their foreign foster parents through the adoption plan constituted a new mode of affective and material exchange across national, racial, and cultural boundaries that I call "global intimacy." Linking the economic relationship of "sponsorship" to the emotional relationship of "adoption," these programs sought to produce enduring bonds meaningful to both child and sponsor. While the exchange of photographs and personal letters gave meaning to the exchange of money; the exchange of money in turn leant substance and credibility to the expressions of love contained in letters and jotted on the backs of photographs. At the same time, the adoption plan was also deeply ideological, embedding the relationships between children and their sponsors within the politics of WWII and the Cold War. While the promotional materials that introduced Americans like Joy to the adoption plan sometimes framed child sponsorship as a powerful means of spreading Christianity or containing the spread of Communism in Asia, Feng-ming's story makes clear that the adoption plan could also be used to channel funds to Communist-friendly institutions and spread positive narratives of Communist rule across Cold War lines. At once emotional and economic, humanitarian and political, the adoption plan transformed the emotional loyalties of children into a key battleground on the affective terrain of these global conflicts.

The history of international adoption and child sponsorship in China sheds new light on the global history of humanitarianism, the intertwining of intimate relations and international

relations during the WWII and Cold War eras, and the political significance of children in modern Chinese history and global history. By analyzing how Chinese child welfare institutions cultivated sentimental ties between children and their foster parents to mold international opinion of China, I show how children were enlisted as important actors within the international political campaigns of both the Nationalist and Communist Parties. Engaging with recent scholarship that has argued that the provision of global humanitarian aid served the Cold War foreign policy interests of Western powers, this dissertation explores how the recipients and critics of humanitarian aid in China both shaped and challenged the post-WWII global humanitarian order.

Global Humanitarianism: Histories and Historiographies

Scholars and practitioners have long debated the definition of humanitarianism. In line with numerous other historians, I use the term humanitarianism broadly to refer to activism on behalf of distant strangers.[5] However, humanitarian organizations typically define their work more narrowly. The most influential humanitarian organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross ("ICRC"), defines its "exclusively humanitarian mission" as the "impartial, neutral, and independent" provision of assistance to "victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence."[6] By describing humanitarianism as apolitical by definition, the ICRC and other organizations seek to secure maximum support for their work across all sides of the

[5] For a discussion of the definition of humanitarianism, see Michael Barnett and Jancie Gross Stein, "Introduction: The Secularization and Sanctification of Humanitarianism," in Michael Barnett and Jancie Gross Stein (ed.), *Sacred Aid: Faith and Humanitarianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11-15. On the relationship between humanitarianism and human rights, see Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), especially 220-221, 243 (n. 17); "Theses on Humanitarianism and Human Rights," *Humanity Journal*, September 23, 2016. Available at http://humanityjournal.org/blog/theses-on-humanitarianism-and-human-rights/.

[6] *The ICRC: Its Mission and Work* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2009), 4. Available at: https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0963.pdf.

conflicts into which they intervene. However, such definitions do not capture how humanitarianism has been practiced historically. As historians have amply demonstrated, from its inception the practice of providing aid to far-away strangers has been deeply intertwined with political, economic, religious, and social agendas.

Although the term "humanitarianism" was not widely used until the early nineteenth century, the *longue durée* history of humanitarianism can be traced back to the beginnings of European overseas colonialism in the sixteenth century.[7] Peter Stamatov argues that "long-distance advocacy" was first institutionalized through the work of religious actors on behalf of non-Europeans during the processes of colonization between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.[8] More commonly, however, historians locate the roots of modern humanitarianism with the emergence of the British abolitionist movement in the mid-eighteenth century. The dominant historiographical tradition in this regard locates the rise of abolitionism—and its underlying humanitarian sentiment—with the rise of capitalism. The view that the rise of humanitarianism was epiphenomenal to the rise of capitalism has roots dating back to Eric Williams' classic 1944 book *Capitalism and Slavery*, in which he argued against the idea that humanitarian motives explained the rise of British abolitionism, arguing instead that abolitionism was rooted in slavery's declining profitability.[9] As a corollary to Williams' claims, and informed by Marx's critique of "bourgeois socialism," historians in ensuing decades developed the argument that capitalism was a necessary condition for the rise of the humanitarian sentiment

[7] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 19.

[8] Peter Stamatov, *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism*: *Religion, Empires and Advocacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). While scholars have tended to treat post-WWII transnational humanitarianism as a new and novel phenomenon, Samatov makes a case for historical continuity, arguing that humanitarians today continue to use the "scripts" developed by religious actors in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries.

[9] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1944).

expressed through eighteenth-century proposals such as the abolition of slavery, prison reform, poor relief, and the humane treatment of native peoples. In outline, the rise of a new bourgeoisie with control over society's means of production had a class interest in measures that ensured the docility and productivity of the work force. Supposedly benevolent measures to prevent the worst abuses of the working class were therefore also self-interested policies implemented by the bourgeoisie to prevent any major disruptions to their own power and profits.[10]

Historians of nineteenth- and twentieth-century humanitarianism have focused on the deeply intertwined relationship between humanitarianism and empire. In his widely cited book *Empire of Humanity*, Michael Barnett traces the formation of the "international humanitarian order," which he defines as "a cosmopolis of morally minded militias supported by international law, norms, and institutions that reach out to suffering strangers around the world." Barnett argues that the international humanitarian order resembles an empire in three key respects: 1) "long-distance rule by one people over another"; 2) "rule without the blessing or participation of the people; and 3) "power radiat[ing] downward for the purpose of advancing the empire's interests."[11] Taking this argument a step further, Rob Skinner and Alan Lester contend that the connection between humanitarianism and empire "is not a simple matter of resemblance," but

[10] A classic statement of this argument can be found in David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 1770-1823 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975). For an insightful summary and critique of this argument, see Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (1985), 339-361. Haskell makes the alternative argument that the rise of capitalism and free-market competition led to fundamental changes in modes of cognition that underpinned *both* the perception of new class interests and increased sensitivity to human suffering. His argument nevertheless retains the essential causal connection between the rise of capitalism and the rise of humanitarian sentiment. In contrast, Peter Stamatov rejects the fundamental premise of this historiography, arguing instead that the "moral dimension" of humanitarianism "cannot be explained as deriving from the logic of economic transformations." He posits that abolitionism—and its underlying humanitarian sentiments—"was a casually significant, non-derivative phenomenon that needs, first, to be studied and understood in its complexity and, second, to be situated in a complex causal context." Peter Stamatov, "Beyond and Against Capitalism: Abolitionism and the Moral Dimension of Humanitarian Practice," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 65, No. 215-216 (2014), 33.

[11] Barnett, 220-221.

rather "the two phenomena are ultimately bound together in a series of mutually constituting histories."[12] Numerous case studies illustrate this close relationship between humanitarianism and imperialism. For example, Ian Tyrell has shown how the dramatic upsurge in American relief efforts abroad during the 1890s helped pave the way for the United States' acquisition of a formal empire in 1898.[13] In her work on the British Save the Children Fund in the interwar period, Emily Baughan argues that its humanitarian agenda "was involved in a process of reimagining the British Empire as a peaceable, moral force, which exemplified the co-operative spirit of internationalism."[14] Even those humanitarians who were deeply critical of imperialism were nevertheless dependent upon the "structures of imperial power" to carry out their work.[15]

A crucial part of this global history, the first humanitarian projects in China were deeply intertwined with the arrival of foreign imperialism. Humanitarian organizations dedicated to Chinese causes emerged almost immediately after the mid-nineteenth century Opium Wars forced the Qing Empire to grant trading rights, extraterritoriality (immunity from local legal jurisdiction), and other privileges to Western powers. The famed American medical missionary Peter Parker once described the Opium Wars as the "design of Providence" to enable Christian work in China. The U.S. Minister to China, Charles Denby, in turn praised missionary

[12] Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 40, No. 5, (2012), 731, 740.

[13] Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[14] Emily Baughan, "'Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!': Empire, Internationalism, and the Save the Children Fund in Inter-war Britain," *Historical Research*, Vol. 86, No. 231 (2013), 116.

[15] Skinner and Lester, 735. For an example of an empirical case study that illustrates this point, see Bronwen Everill, "Bridgeheads of Empire? Liberated African Missionaries in West Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 40, No. 5 (2012), 789-805.

humanitarians like Parker as "the pioneers of trade and commerce" in China.[16] In her study of American women missionaries who dedicated their careers to providing medical care and education for Chinese women and children, Carol Chin concludes, "American missionary women engaged in what can be called 'beneficent imperialism.' Confident they were bestowing the benefits of a more advanced civilization on China, they were quite unabashed about trying to impose their culture on the Chinese and expressed little discomfort with either their privileged position in Chinese society or the implicit backing they enjoyed from the power of the U.S. Government."[17]

In the aftermath of WWII, humanitarian aid agencies expanded on an unprecedented global scale, and their work took on increasingly urgent political significance in the context of the Cold War. This global proliferation of humanitarian aid is generally narrated as an expansion from a European core out to Asian and African peripheries. By the late 1940s, the work of private relief organizations in Europe had largely been superseded by state-sponsored rehabilitation efforts like the United States' Marshall Plan. Propelled by discourses of humanity that in theory made the suffering of Asians and Africans equally important to that of Europeans, humanitarian agencies followed "the trail of suffering from Europe to the rest of the world." In the context of the Cold War, humanitarian rescue was not only an end in itself but also a means to the foreign policy goal of preventing the spread of Communism. Barnett argues that powerful states like the United States and Britain were increasingly willing "to underwrite a

[16] Quoted in Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 75-76.

[17] "Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2003), 328. As Chin points out, individual missionary humanitarians were often sharply critical of the imperialism that enabled their philanthropy. For example, Sarah Conger, the wife of the American minister in Beijing E.H. Conger, once wrote, "I do not wonder that the Chinese hate the foreigner. The foreigner is frequently severe and exacting in this Empire which is not his own. He often treats the Chinese as though they were dogs and had no rights whatever—no wonder they growl and sometimes bite." Chin, 350.

humanitarianism they viewed as vehicles of influence," "integrating humanitarianism into their foreign policies" to the point of "erasing the distinction between themselves and aid agencies."[18]

In line with this broader narrative, historians have argued that the rise of international adoption and child sponsorship in Cold War East Asia served U.S. foreign policy goals. In the 1950s, American organizations created the first large-scale programs for legal international adoption, primarily targeting the mixed-race children of U.S. soldiers and local women in Japan and Korea. As scholars such as Eleana Kim, Catherine Choy, and Arissa Oh have argued, the Cold War imperative of winning Asian hearts and minds helped make these children highly desirable for adoption by mostly white, U.S. couples.[19] While there has been much less research on the history of child sponsorship, scholars have similarly explained its history through the lens of U.S. Cold War foreign policy. Writing about American child sponsorship organizations in 1950s Asia, Christina Klein argued that by creating symbolic family ties between Americans and Asian children, these programs helped make "America's increasing commitment to Asia seem natural, legitimate, and morally sound—and thus palatable to the millions of voters and taxpayers who had to pay the bill."[20] Likewise, Sara Fieldston has argued that American child

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[18] Barnett, 118-124.

[19] Recent works on the origins of international adoption in Cold War Asia include, Eleana Kim, *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010);); Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015). Laura Briggs argues that "Madonna and child" images of suffering children both at home and abroad in 1930s U.S. media also played an important role in shaping Americans' sense of responsibility for suffering children abroad. See Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: the Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2012), 129-146. Emily Baughan has also shown that Anglo-American philanthropists, soldiers, and diplomats internationally adopted children from war-torn Europe as form of humanitarian rescue in the aftermath of WWI. Emily Baughan, "International Adoption and Anglo-American Internationalism, *c.* 1918-1925," *Past and Present*, No. 239 (2018), 181-217.

[20] Christina Klein, "Family Ties and Political Obligation: The Discourse of Adoption and the Cold War Commitment to Asia," in *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966,* ed. Christian G. Appy (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 65; see also Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 152-159.

sponsorship programs were premised on the idea that "intimate relationships between Americans and children overseas would curtail the spread of communism, binding together the citizens of the free world with ties that supported the United States' political alliances."[21]

In short, whether they view humanitarian projects as facilitating imperialist agendas or mitigating imperialism's worst effects, scholars have almost uniformly approached humanitarianism from the perspective of its primarily Western donors. Even scholarship taking an explicitly transnational approach has focused overwhelmingly on what Silvia Salvatici aptly termed "the supply-side of humanitarian actions."[22] As a result, historians have paid less attention to how the people who *received* aid in the non-Western world reshaped humanitarian programs to suit their own interests.[23] In a conversation on the history of humanitarianism recently published in *Past and Present*, the participating scholars were nearly unanimous in arguing, in the words of Emily Baughan, that understanding "the ways the work of aid organizations has been shaped, altered, and, at times, resisted by its 'beneficiaries'" is among the most pressing tasks for historians of humanitarianism going forward. As Kevin O'Sullivan put

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[21] Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 80. See also, Sara Fieldston, "Little Cold Warriors: Child Sponsorship and International Affairs," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2014), 240-250. Fieldston builds off Christina Klein's earlier argument that by creating symbolic family ties between Americans and Asian children, child sponsorship programs helped make "America's increasing commitment to Asia seem natural, legitimate, and morally sound—and thus palatable to the millions of voters and taxpayers who had to pay the bill." Christina Klein, "Family Ties and Political Obligation: The Discourse of Adoption and the Cold War Commitment to Asia," in *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966,* ed. Christian G. Appy (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 65; see also Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*.

[22] Silvia Salvatici, *A History of Humanitarianism, 1755-1989: In the Name of Others* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

[23] Some recent scholarship has begun to challenge this Eurocentric approach to the history of humanitarianism. For example, Mark R. Frost has shown that in the Colonial Straits Settlements, Chinese, Arab, Malay, and Indian communities were often much more active than Europeans in providing humanitarian aid across racial, religious, and geographic boundaries. Writing about famine relief in early twentieth-century China, Pierre Fuller provides a useful reminder that well-publicized international relief campaigns often paled in significance to local charity. Mark R. Frost, "Humanitarianism and the Overseas Aid Craze in Britain's Colonial Straits Settlements, 1870-1920," *Past and Present*, Vol. 236, No. 1 (2017), 169-205; Pierre Fuller, "North China Famine Revisited: Unsung Native Relief in the Warlord Era, 1920-1921," *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 47, No. 3 (2013), 820-850.

it, the field "remains overly focused on the global North and on donor narratives of aid…Put simply, we still know very little about what it was like to be on the receiving end of these interventions." In large part, this reflects the extent to which recent histories of humanitarianism have relied on the archives of European and North American aid organizations as their primary source base. "[W]ithout reading languages and archives beyond those of humanitarian organizations," Tehilia Sasson noted, "historians risk (even if they don't intend to) telling a story that doesn't account for the agency of the populations who are recipients of this aid."[24] On the one hand, scholars have justifiably criticized humanitarians past and present for failing "to ensure the 'victims' of the world can speak on their own behalf and define their own vision of progress."[25] On the other hand, an almost exclusive focus on the providers rather than the recipients of aid has ultimately reinforced the impression that only the perspectives of the would-be rescuers matter.

Reconceptualizing the Global Humanitarian Order

In contrast, my dissertation reconsiders the historical processes through which "humanitarianism went global after WWII."[26] First, it emphasizes the role of Chinese diasporic networks in bringing Asian causes to the forefront of the global humanitarian conscience. During WWII, Chinese child welfare organizations such as the National Association for Refugee Children utilized the adoption plan to attract mass numbers of donors from across Southeast Asia, Oceania, North America, and Europe. In all of these locations, Chinese migrant elites

[24] Matthew Hilton, Tehila Sasson, Kevin O'Sullivan, Eleanor Davey, Bronwen Everill, and Emily Baughan, "History and Humanitarianism: A Conversation," *Past and Present*, Vol. 241, No. 1 (2018), e15-28.

[25] Barnett, 14.

[26] Barnett, 118.

utilized their multicultural skills and transnational social networks to promote and coordinate the adoption plan on a global scale. This work included: translating and reformulating Chinese philanthropic appeals for global audiences; founding "cooperating associations" that fundraised locally for Chinese child welfare institutions; and facilitating the international circulation of money, gifts, photographs, and publicity materials under conditions of global war. In total, their efforts attracted donations from four continents in at least thirteen currencies—one of the first truly "global" humanitarian fundraising campaigns. It was primarily *after* WWII that new transnational aid organizations founded by European and American missionaries began utilizing the adoption plan to fundraise for their own child welfare work in China and across Asia. As the case study of the adoption plan makes clear, humanitarian aid organizations did not simply expand their focus from Europe to Asia. To a considerable extent, the post-WWII global humanitarian order was historically constituted *through* Asia and its diasporas—which included but were not limited to Europe and North America.

Moreover, my dissertation asks how the global history of humanitarianism might appear differently by focusing on those who received help in addition to those who provided it. By the "recipients" of humanitarian aid, I refer broadly to the people and institutions that were its intended beneficiaries. In the case of the adoption plan, these include the China branch offices of transnational humanitarian organizations, the child welfare institutions they funded, individual "foster children," and the Chinese government agencies that had their social welfare burdens lightened by aid from abroad. To answer this question archivally, I researched the adoption plan across five distinct but overlapping levels:

1) The headquarters of the transnational aid organizations that coordinated the adoption plan in cities like New York, Richmond (Virginia), and Wellington (New Zealand).

2) The China branch offices of these organizations in cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chongqing.
3) The specific child welfare institutions across China funded by the adoption plan.
4) Individual "foster parents" and the children they sponsored.
5) Local and national government agencies in China that regulated humanitarian aid.

This multi-sited archival research reveals the disagreements, disjunctures, and communication delays that characterized global humanitarian work. It is worth noting that I found little evidence of fraud. Rather, people across all levels of the adoption plan—from the executive secretaries of enormous transnational organizations to the *amahs* who cared for orphanage children at below-subsistence wages—generally appear to have been committed to the shared goal of providing food, shelter, and education for children in need. Nevertheless, if the adoption plan was first and foremost about caring for children, it was always also about something else—and the political significance attributed to the adoption plan varied widely among actors at different levels of the global humanitarian project. Specifically, I argue that the recipients of aid on the ground in China shaped the symbolic meanings and practical uses of the adoption plan for their own purposes. More broadly, I use the case study of the adoption plan to suggest a new approach to the history of humanitarianism that incorporates the significant ways in which the recipients of aid in the non-Western world shaped the practices and politics of the global humanitarian order.

Wartime China and the World

This dissertation illustrates the shifting political uses of global humanitarianism in modern China. It traces how the practices of Christian humanitarianism developed under Nationalist rule were briefly reinvented as "revolutionary humanitarianism" in the early PRC—

until the Korean War ultimately led the Chinese Communist government to cut off all aid from abroad, ushering in a new age of Cold War humanitarianism. All of this took place against the ubiquitous backdrop of war: the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945), the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), and the Korean War (1950-1953). In recent years, China's mid-century wars have received renewed scholarly attention. Historians such as Rana Mitter and Hans van de Ven have argued for the centrality of China to the overall Allied war effort as well as for the significance of war as an instrument of politics in modern Chinese history.[27] Recent studies have likewise called attention to the complex social effects of these wars in China, including environmental degradation, mass refugee flight, and the rise of internment and labor camps as a powerful tool for disciplining society.[28] Among the most important consequences of the outbreak of full-scale war in 1937 was an unprecedented outpouring of private philanthropy and state-sponsored relief aid.[29] Some historians have argued that these efforts demonstrate the Nationalists' genuine commitment to the Sisyphean task of mitigating the human toll of total war.[30] However, such philanthropic ventures were also an attempt to instrumentalize groups

[27] Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013); Hans van de Ven, *China at War: Triumph and Tragedy in the Emergence of the New China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); John B. Thompson, "The People's War," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 18, 2018. Available at: https://chinachannel.org/2018/06/18/china-at-war/.

[28] For example, Micah Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China: Henan Province, the Yellow River, and Beyond, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Keith R. Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness: Refugees During the Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Klaus Mühlhahn, *Criminal Justice in China: A History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[29] Nara Dillon, "The Politics of Philanthropy: Social Networks and Refugee Relief in Shanghai, 1932-1949," in Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi (ed.), *At the Crossroads of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and State-building in Republican Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[30] Rana Mitter and Helen Schneider, "Introduction: Relief and Reconstruction in Wartime China," *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2012), 179-186.

such as war orphans and rural women into service and sacrifice for the state.[31] Moreover, as Hans van de Ven reminds us, "China was at war not just with Japan but also with itself."[32] As a result of this fragmentation, Margaret Tillman argues, war "diversified the political significance" of competing child rescue projects in locations such as Nationalist Chongqing, Communist Yan'an, and Japanese-occupied Shanghai.[33] In line with broader historiographical trends, scholarship on China's relief programs has helped rehabilitate the wartime record of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists while also highlighting the instrumentalization of wartime suffering for state-building projects.

At the heart of this new historiography on wartime China are two questions that are often considered side-by-side but rarely fully integrated. How did the experience of war change China? And, what was China's role in the global story of WWII and the Cold War? In contrast, the case study of the adoption plan reveals the extent to which the far-reaching transformations that occurred *within* China during the wartime years shaped competing efforts to define China's significance to these global conflicts. While the adoption plan began as a United Front effort to mitigate the suffering wrought by war with Japan, it quickly transformed into a way for both the Nationalists and Communists to secure resources, attract international support, and mobilize marginalized populations for their violent struggle to control China's postwar future. The Chinese child welfare institutions supported by the adoption plan sought to transform war orphans into modern citizens capable of building a new China out of the ashes of war—and into

[31] M. Colette Plum, "Lost Childhoods in a New China: Child-Citizen-Workers at War, 1937-1945," *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2012), 237-258; Helen Schneider, "Mobilising Women: The Women's Advisory Council, Resistance, and Reconstruction During China's War with Japan."

[32] Van de Ven, *China at War*, 4.

[33] Margaret Mih Tillman, *Raising China's Revolutionaries: Modernizing Childhood for Cosmopolitan Nationalists and Liberated Comrades, 1920s-1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 80.

"people's diplomats" capable of molding international opinion of China at a grassroots level. Wartime humanitarianism created an essential link between domestic political mobilization and international soft power that has remained an important facet of Chinese politics to the present.

Global Humanitarianism's Intimate Turn

The rise of international adoption and child sponsorship played a key role in transforming the emotional logic of humanitarianism to meet the new material conditions of the post-WWII international order. Since the eighteenth century, the emotional underpinnings of humanitarian action had been sympathy, compassion, and pity for the plight of distant others—a feeling of moral obligation to help suffering strangers for no other reason than their shared humanity.[34] Before the mid-twentieth century, when specific humanitarian appeals were relatively few and far between, human sympathy was sufficient to motivate significant numbers of people to action. However, the rapid proliferation of humanitarian causes after WWII rendered human sympathy insufficient as an impetus to humanitarian action. When countless tales of human suffering arrived simultaneously from different corners of the world—each luridly documented and promoted as desperately urgent in newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and radio broadcasts—sympathy with the suffering of one's fellow humanity provided little guidance on where to direct limited emotional and material resources. In part for this reason, in the United States private humanitarian giving decreased in the immediate post-WWII period: an early instance of the now-familiar phenomenon of "compassion fatigue." Once humanitarianism "went global," human sympathy no longer offered a compelling reason to donate to any *specific* humanitarian cause.

[34] Samuel Moyn, "Empathy in History, Empathizing with Humanity," *History and Theory*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2006), 397-415.

At this moment when overall humanitarian giving was in precipitous decline, the adoption plan flourished by appealing to intimacy in addition to sympathy as a driver of humanitarian engagement. From 1945-1947, the total revenue of American private voluntary organizations fell by fifty percent.[35] Yet during this same time period, the largest U.S.-based international child sponsorship organization, China's Children Fund, saw its total revenue more than double.[36] What explains the extraordinary fundraising success of the adoption plan in the midst of what was otherwise a time of sharply declining humanitarian giving? The adoption plan differed from previous humanitarian work by utilizing improved transportation and communications technologies to foster personal relationships among the givers and receivers of humanitarian aid. The fictive kinship ties created by the exchange of photographs, gifts, and letters created a sense of personal obligation—a reason to donate to one specific child despite the near-infinite number of worthy causes competing for donors' attention. Put differently, the foster parent who wrote a check every month to support a Chinese war orphan did so not simply because the child was human, but because the child was *hers*. The adoption plan remained essentially humanitarian in the sense that any suffering child—regardless of race or nationality—was a potential object of rescue. But its emotional power derived from the idea that it was the formation of a personal connection that provided the moral impetus to help. By appealing to the desire to forge an intimate bond with a specific child, the adoption plan helped transform humanitarian fundraising for the new global information environment of the post-WWII world.

[35] The total revenue of U.S.-based private voluntary organizations fell from US $2.8 billion to US $1.4 billion between 1945 and 1947 (measured in 2005 dollars). Rachel M. McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy since 1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 20.

[36] Larry E. Tise, *A Book About Children: The World of Christian Children's Fund, 1938-1991* (Falls Church: Hartland Publishing, 1993), 301.

Intimate Relations and International Relations

The personal relationships forged between the givers and receivers of transnational philanthropy in turn transformed the political possibilities of global humanitarianism. Prior to WWII, donors to international humanitarian causes were unlikely to know who specifically benefitted from their contributions, let alone receive any communication from them. Under such circumstances, the recipients of humanitarian aid had little opportunity to shape how donors understood the political significance of their philanthropy. The adoption plan changed that. In the context of WWII and the Cold War, different organizations sought to mobilize the economic and emotional bonds forged through the adoption plan in service of a diverse set of often competing political and religious projects. The American transnational aid organizations that utilized the adoption plan often imagined that by fostering close, affectionate relationships between individual Americans and Asian children, the adoption plan would be more effective than other humanitarian programs in promoting values such as Christianity, democracy, and anti-Communism it was assumed that foster parents embodied. Nevertheless, it was generally left to the China branch offices of these organizations, which employed almost exclusively Chinese staff, to determine which specific child welfare institutions to fund, guide children writing their letters, and translate the correspondence going both ways. In this context, organizations such as the PLAN China Branch could systematically transfer PLAN funds to Communist-affiliated institutions such as the Yu Tsai School while encouraging children like Feng-ming to write letters describing in intimate detail how they had suffered under the American-allied Nationalist Party but were now thriving under the Communists. Moving beyond interpretations of global humanitarianism as a vector of Western influence, I argue that the adoption plan was also a

powerful tool deployed by local actors to secure funding and build international support for their own political and social projects.

The adoption plan's political potency was dependent upon the maintenance of close, affectionate relationships between children and their foster parents. For contemporary readers, it may strain credulity to imagine that many children felt a sense of intimacy with foreign strangers whom they almost never met in person. And, of course, the actual extent of intimacy developed through the adoption plan varied enormously. Nevertheless, a significant number of children wrote letters that went far beyond the generic requirements imposed upon them in expressing their depth of feeling toward their foster parents. One letter from a boy named Cheng-ho to his foster father Gerald provides a window into the significance he attached to the adoption plan:

> I miss you all very much. Every day when I have nothing to do I take out your picture and look at it, and I always wish that I could talk to you in person. Or I take out the letters you've sent and read through them again…I hope that you will write me often. Will you do that?[37]

One motif that recurs periodically in children's letters is meeting foster families in their dreams. A boy named Da-shin wrote to his foster family to describe a dream in which they had come to China to visit him:

> Yesterday I dreamed that you all came here to visit me. I was so happy! I invited you into our living room to sit. After we ate some candy, I took you to visit our different workrooms. I even knitted a pair of socks for you to see. You encouraged me to study hard so that in the future I can establish myself in society. You praised the different flowers, so I picked a bunch of beautiful flowers to give to my little brothers to play with, and I also took them to play on the slide. I stopped paying attention for a moment, and little brother fell down from the top of the slide. I was so scared, but it turned out to be a dream. Isn't that funny?[38]

[37] Letter from Cheng-ho, July 8, 1949, Box 115, Folder 84, *FFP*.

[38] Letter by Da-shin, July 6, 1949, Box 115, Folder 87, *FPP*; Case File #C230, Box 47, Folder 42, *FPP*.

The adoption plan could also leave children feeling jealous, lonely, and confused. While children were required to write at set intervals, their foster parents only wrote when (and if) they pleased. One letter from a boy named Jin-chun to his foster father Marvin divulged both the intense joys and deep anxieties he felt regarding their relationship:

> Why haven't you written to me in so long? I really miss you very much, and I often feel frustrated because I don't get letters from you. Even if you sent a letter writing just one sentence or even one word it would make me so happy that I would jump for joy. Because it was written with your own hand. I would feel your love and care for me from the letter. I still remember how happy I was when I received the letter that you wrote me before and all the things you sent…Sometimes I also feel afraid to write you letters, because I don't know what it is that I'm supposed to write to you. What do you want to know? What would make you happy to know?[39]

By investigating how these intimate expressions of love, longing, anxiety, and frustration intersected with the explicitly political goals of the adoption plan, my dissertation contributes to our understanding of how global politics have shaped intimate relationships, and how intimate relationships have in turn reshaped global politics.

The rise of global intimacy through international adoption and child sponsorship was historically conditioned by the long history of what Ann Stoler calls "colonial intimacy," a descriptor for the particular set of intimate relationships formed between colonizers and colonized. As Stoler argues, "a racially coded notion of who could be intimate with whom—and in what ways" was "a primary concern in colonial policy."[40] The regulation of colonial intimacies in Asia was central to reproducing the structures of colonial rule by maintaining clear demarcations between the colonizers and the colonized. For example, in colonial French Indochina, a whole body of paternity law limited the ability of the *métis* children of French men

[39] Letter from Jin-chun, Box 46, Folder 39, *FFP*.

[40] Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).

and local women to claim French citizenship.[41] In early twentieth-century China, American women missionaries worried about their children's relationships with their Chinese domestic servants, describing with serious disapprobation how their children spoke Chinese better than English, preferred Chinese to Western food, and liked to play with Chinese rather than American dolls.[42] Fears of transracial mixing were also expressed through Asian exclusion laws that sharply restricted the global mobility of Asian laborers and widespread anti-miscegenation laws explicitly prohibiting white-Asian intermarriage.[43]

In this context, international adoption and child sponsorship flourished in large part because they offered a vision of transracial intimacy without transracial mixing. Anxieties over transracial intimacy were often less about transracial intimacy *per se* than about the products of transracial intimacy—especially mixed-race children and what Ann Stoler has called "cultural defection."[44] It was not the presence of racial difference but the prospect of *eliminating* racial hierarchy that made transracial intimacy so threatening. Rooted in sentiment but not in sex, the adoption plan allowed for transracial intimacy without transracial people. Likewise, because young children (and especially Asian children) were often viewed as racially malleable, adoptive parents in the global North believed that they could be seamlessly integrated into mainstream

[41] Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[42] Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Twentieth Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

[43] On the global history of Asian exclusion, see Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). On the history of anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, see Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Emma Teng has demonstrated that despite these obstacles, many people did manage to form Chinese-American transnational families in the United States during the exclusion era. See Emma Jinhua Teng, *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China, and Hong Kong, 1842-1943* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013).

[44] Stoler, 79-111.

white society without threatening its fundamental character.[45] By promising to maintain firm racial hierarchies between donors in the global North and the Asian children they sought to uplift, international adoption and child sponsorship authorized very particular forms of global intimacy in the context of exclusionary immigration laws, taboos against interracial sex, and the stigmatization of mixed-race children. By putting international adoption and child sponsorship into conversation with research on topics such as transnational migration, miscegenation, prostitution, and domestic labor, the concept of global intimacy seeks to foster interdisciplinary inquiry into how and why national, racial, and cultural boundaries facilitate certain forms of intimacy while excluding and stigmatizing others.

As Viviana Zelizer has argued, intimate relationships are almost always inseparable from issues of power and money.[46] While normative accounts often treat "intimate relations as a world apart from the economy," commentators such as the prominent "law and economics" champion Richard Posner have argued the opposite, that "intimate transfers—be they of sex, babies, or blood—operate according to principles identical with transfers of stock shares or used cars." Treating intimate relations as related but not reducible to forms of coercion and payment, Zelizer suggests that we ask not *whether* money and power shape intimate relationships but rather how people "adopt symbols, rituals, practices, and physically distinguishable forms of money to mark distinct social relations."[47] The global inequalities that underpinned the transfer of large quantities of monetary aid from donors across the global North to Asian children likewise structured the relationships they formed through the adoption plan. While the adoption

[45] On American views of the "racial flexibility" of Chinese children in the context of international adoption, see Sara K. Dorow, *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[46] Viviana Zelizer, *The Purchase of Intimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[47] Viviana Zelizer, "The Purchase of Intimacy," *Law & Social Inquiry*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2000), 817-848.

plan could be used as a form of soft power to influence international donors' views of China, Chinese children and the institutions that housed them ultimately remained economically dependent upon the emotional satisfaction of their international sponsors. Participation in the adoption plan also made Chinese child welfare institutions complicit in constructing the global North's relationship to China as paternal, benevolent, and humanitarian. These unequal relations of power and money inherent to global humanitarianism proved a consistent challenge for those who sought to utilize the adoption plan in service of the anti-imperialist agendas of the War of Resistance Against Japan and the Chinese Communist Revolution. Those who had participated in the adoption plan were also left vulnerable to attack when, in the context of the Korean War, the Chinese Communist government turned sharply—and sometimes violently—against global humanitarians and those who relied on them.

Due to the high stakes involved, children in the adoption plan were rarely free to write whatever they wanted to the sponsors upon whose continued donations their livelihood depended. Rather, both the transnational aid organizations that coordinated the adoption plan and the child welfare institutions they funded devoted considerable resources to ensuring that children wrote letters that furthered their philanthropic and political goals. By turning to the ways adults shaped, translated, and sometimes censored children's letters, we can unravel the specific roles played by children in the larger project of cultivating global intimacy to influence global politics.

Can the Chinese Child Speak?

In 2008, Peter Stearns wrote in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* that the "granddaddy issue" facing historians of childhood involves "the virtually unprecedented problems of getting information from children themselves as opposed to

adult perceptions and recommendations."[48] This issue has been especially acute in the field of modern Chinese history. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, generations of Chinese philosophers, scientists, educators, and activists singled out the child as a central figure of modernization upon whom rested the fate of the nation.[49] The famous final words of Lu Xun's 1918 story "Diary of a Madman" (*Save the children!*) were both a rallying cry and a paradox: How can children be saved by adults always already tainted with the Confucian culture modernizing reformers hoped to replace?[50] In recent years, a small body of scholarship has emerged to address the central place of children in the discourses and practices of Chinese modernity by examining topics such as child welfare institutions, childhood education, children's literature, child labor, and youth groups.[51] However, citing a lack of sources, these works rarely incorporate the voices and perspectives of children themselves.[52] As a result, historians have focused primarily on adult prescriptions for children rather than children's actual experiences—

[48] Peter N. Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," *Journal of the History of Chilldhood and Youth* Vol. 1, No. 1 (*2008): 35-42.*

[49] Major works addressing the political significance of children in modern Chinese history include Jon L. Saari, *Legacies of Childhood: Growing Up Chinese in a time of Crisis, 1890-1920* (Ann Kinney Behnke [ed.], *Chinese Views of Childhood* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995); Ping-chen Hsiung, *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2008); Andrew Jones, *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Margaret Mih Tillman, *Raising China's Revolutionaries: Modernizing Childhood for Cosmopolitan Nationalists and Liberated Comrades, 1920s-1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). For a brief historiographical essay on childhood in China, see Ping-chen Hsiung, "Treading a Different Path?: Thoughts on Childhood Studies in Chinese History," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008), 77-85.

[50] Jones, 105-111.

[51] Some recent examples include Colette M. Plum, "Unlikely Heirs: War Orphans during the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945," PhD Dissertation, Stanford University (2006); Plum, "Lost Childhoods in a New China: Child-Citizen-Workers at War, 1937-1945," *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2012), 237-258; Janet Y. Chen, *Guilty of Indigence: The Urban Poor in China, 1900-1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Norman D. Apter, "Saving the Young: A History of the Child Relief Movement in Modern China," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles (2013); Maura Cunningham, "Shanghai's Wandering Ones: Child Welfare in a Global City, 1900-1953," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Irvine (2014); Kyle E. David, "The Poster Child of the 'Second' Cultural Revolution: Huang Shuai and Shifts in Age Consciousness, 1973-1979," *Modern China* Vol. 44, No. 5 (2018), 497-524.

[52] As Maura Cunningham pointed out about researching childhood in China, "conventional libraries and archives rarely contain documents authored by children." Cunningham, 8.

what Margaret Tillman terms "the discursive construction of modern childhood and the institutional mechanisms used to construct it."[53] In other words, while we've learned much about conceptions of *childhood* in modern China, we know less about actual *children*. Children are central characters in the story of modern Chinese history, but historians have yet to give them a speaking role.

My dissertation utilizes a variety of previously overlooked source materials to extensively incorporate the words written by children into my analysis. It is the first work of scholarship to significantly incorporate the childhood voices of Asian war orphans into the history of the transnational humanitarian projects carried out on their behalf. I rely primarily on four genres of sources that were either written by children, contain transcriptions or summaries of children's speech, or provide detailed biographical and behavioral information about individual children: 1) letters children wrote and received through the adoption plan; 2) children's case files at child welfare institutions; 3) records of children's psychological examinations; and 4) excerpts of children's speech in internal reports and publicity materials.

At the heart of my analysis is a collection of 546 letters exchanged between Chinese children and their foreign foster parents that I compiled through research across China and the United States. While the letters exchanged between Chinese children and their foreign foster parents were not systematically copied or archived, many have nevertheless been preserved in ways both deliberate and accidental. I found caches of sponsorship letters in places ranging from Chinese state archives to a storage closet in the basement of the ChildFund International headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. Generally speaking, sponsorship letters were archived for one of several reasons. Some letters were donated back to child welfare organizations by the

[53] Tillman, xiii.

descendants of foster parents after they passed away. Others appear to have been returned to aid organization because they were unable to be delivered. In certain instances, letters were copied for administrative reasons or so that they might be reproduced in publicity materials. While 546 letters constitutes only a small fraction of the many thousands sent and received through the adoption plan, it is nevertheless a sizeable source base for analysis.

Several other genres of sources provide important insights into the children who participated in the adoption plan. Upon sponsoring a Chinese child, foster parents were typically sent a case file providing (to the extent known) the child's name, age, interests, progress in school, family history, and a brief biography often written in the first person. In many cases, it is possible to cross-reference children's letters against their case files, offering insights not only into the biographies of child letter-writers but also into how child welfare institutions curated biographical information to provide to foster parents. Child psychology records provide yet another key source of information about children who participated in the adoption plan. Specifically, in 1943 the Nationalist government's Central Hygiene Laboratory Mental Health Office conducted extensive psychological examinations of institutionalized children—many of whom resided in institutions funded by the adoption plan. The records of their examinations include psychologists' summaries of one-on-one interviews with particular children as well as children's responses to personality-assessment questionnaires. The starkly different ways in which children described their experiences in psychological assessments as compared with the letters they wrote to their foster parents offer a humbling reminder of the epistemological caution necessary when working with children's sources.

Like all historical records, sources purporting to represent children's words, thoughts, and emotions raise a fundamental methodological question: How do we read them? It would be

naïve to assume that children's letters provide unmediated access to their experiences of the world-historical events unfolding around them. However, it would be equally speculative to dismiss them as nothing but a cynical attempt by adults to put their own words into the mouths of children for financial and political gain.[54] How to navigate this impasse? Searching for children's "agency" in sources like letters and psychological assessments risks guilelessly ignoring the highly mediated nature of such materials. Moreover, attempts to recover children's agency in the small acts of resistance sometimes apparent in such sources implicitly deny the agency of the many children who tended to behave in line with adult expectations.[55] Furthermore, traditional notions of agency as being expressed through autonomous public actions driven by rational, informed choices, which were theorized primarily to describe the contributions of adult male bourgeois subjects, often cannot encapsulate the ways in which children shape history.[56] To this extent, the problems of interpreting the sources of children's history can be seen as specific manifestations of methodological issues that also confront

[54] Fieldston makes judicious use of English-language translations of letters written by children through sponsorship programs, but she notes that because children's letters may have been coached, coerced, or altered in translation, they are a "slippery" source in which it can be difficult to discern "genuine" sentiment.[54] This uncertainty regarding sponsorship letters as historical sources stems from the silence of the U.S.-based archives of American child sponsorship agencies regarding the specific circumstances under which children's letters were solicited, composed, and translated. Fieldston quotes from translations of several letters sent by Chinese children via PLAN's adoption plan that praise China's new Communist government. However, her claims that these letters "strayed from the expected script" and "no doubt vexed American voluntary workers and Chinese officials alike" reveal the limitations of reading these letters only in translation and without knowledge of how they were produced on the ground in China. As is discussed at length below, the PLAN China Branch explicitly encouraged Chinese children to use their letters to their foster parents to tell stories about the positive changes in their lives due to the Chinese Communist Revolution. Rather than straying from the script, the letters she quotes in fact stuck closely to the script provided to children by the PLAN China Branch. *Raising the World*, IX-X, 105.

[55] Mona Gleason has argued persuasively that historians of childhood should avoid the "agency trap" of making "the imperative to focus upon youthful autonomy and resistance" the *a priori* goal of analyzing child-produced sources. She instead suggests that historians of childhood practice "empathetic inference," defined as "imagining what any given experience might have meant and been like from the perspective of the young." Mona Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap: Caveats for Historians of Children, Youth, and Education," *History of Education*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2016), 446-459.

[56] Mary Jo Maynes, "Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood," Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008), 114–24.

scholars attempting to write histories from the perspectives of slaves, women, colonial subjects, and the working class.[57]

Children's sources that engage with explicitly political themes—as so many of the sponsorship letters I have collected do—require yet additional layers of caution. Writing about childhood testimonies of the Algerian War of Independence, Alexis Artaud de la Ferrière argues that "when childhood testimonies enter the public sphere—either in books, news items, in film, or as illustrations in policy documents—they have been editorialised by adults." Children's accounts of wartime suffering have been so widely circulated precisely because they elicit an emotional response in readers that tends to divert attention away from the political motives behind their production. Therefore, Artaud de la Ferrière argues, historians must analyze not only the content of children's testimonials but also the "conditions of production and distribution" through which they are "politically instrumentalised." [58] On the other hand, encountering polemical speech attributed to children tends to arouse suspicions of adult manipulation. As Margaret Tillman noted, "the incongruence of childhood innocence and adult politics" both lends such sources their charm and demands rigorous skepticism of whether they represent the "authentic voices of children." Yet Tillman also cautions against assuming that such sources are *entirely* the result of adult manipulation.[59]

The letters Chinese children wrote through the adoption plan provide a rare opportunity to treat the ways in which adults edited, shaped, and censored children's writing as an object of

[57] For a thoughtful analysis of how historians studying age as a category of historical analysis can adapt methodologies from historians of gender, see Steven Mintz, "Reflections on Age as a Category of Historical Analysis," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008), 91-94.

[58] Alexis Artaud de la Ferrière, "The Voice of the Innocent: Propaganda and Childhood Testimonies of War," *History of Education*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2014), 106.

[59] Tillman, xii-xiii.

analysis rather than an obstacle to analysis. The archives of the organizations that coordinated the adoption plan contain voluminous discussion of how to guide children in their letter writing and numerous specific examples of adult intervention. In order to ensure children's letters were consistent with their philanthropic and political goals, aid organizations developed highly detailed guidelines for the content and form of children's letters. These regulations covered issues such as how often children should write and at what length, suggested and forbidden topics of discussion, detailed rules on formatting, and advice on how to elicit the sympathies of foreign sponsors. The imprint of these prescriptions is clearly visible in the generic quality of many children's letters. Nevertheless, reading actual children's letters against agency regulations, it is apparent how difficult it was to enforce rigid rules on children writing from institutions dispersed across China under highly unstable conditions of war and revolution. Every one of the letters I have read is unique, and many diverged sharply from prescribed topics and forms. As one PLAN China Branch internal report bluntly put it, "We do not have enough control over the children's letters."[60] In the gaps between what transnational aid agencies wanted children to write and what they actually wrote, it is clear that these organizations required the active participation of children in order to achieve their charitable and ideological aims.

If aid agencies feared that the content or tone of a child's letter threatened their philanthropic or political goals, they utilized the necessity of translation as an opportunity to edit or even censor children's letters. When foster parents received their adoptees' letters, they typically received both the handwritten Chinese original as well as a typewritten translation. In the vast majority of cases, I have been able to locate both the Chinese originals and English-language translations of children's letters—oftentimes still stapled together in the archives. As

[60] Zhan zai ertong yiyang hui zhongguo fenhui 1950 nian shang ban nian gongzuo zongjie 戰災兒童義養會中國分會 1950 年上半年工作總結 [Foster Parents' Plan for War Children China Branch Work Summary for the First Half of 1950], C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

the majority of sponsors did not read Chinese, if children's letters included content that their sponsoring organizations found problematic, the translators often simply removed the offending portion from the English translation. In some cases, translation was used to smooth over discrepancies in how Chinese children and their foster parents expressed familial intimacy. In other instances, letters were censored for overtly political reasons. By systematically comparing the translations of children's letters with the Chinese originals, I reverse engineer the logics of cultural mediation and political censorship through which aid organizations mediated the interactions between children and their foster parents.

In sum, by setting aside the often unanswerable question of whether children's writings accurately reflect "authentic" children's voices, I instead use this unique cache of sources to inquire into the historical significance of children's writing itself. My specific case study asks: What role did children's letters to their foster parents play in reconfiguring the politics of global humanitarianism during the WWII and Cold War eras? To answer this question, I proceed along two lines of analysis. In addition to close reading children's letters to unpack the particular ways they narrated their experiences to foreign audiences, I also investigate the specific ways in which transnational aid organizations and Chinese child welfare workers participated in the writing and translation of their letters. While Chinese war orphans—those quintessential "victims" of the humanitarian imagination—played an active role in shaping the significance of the aid they received, their voices were sometimes silenced or spoken over.

Chapter Précis

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapters one and two collectively examine how the rise of the adoption plan for international child sponsorship in WWII-era China

precipitated a broader "intimate turn" in global humanitarian practice. Chapter one focuses on the National Association for Refugee Children, the largest child welfare organization in wartime China, which fundraised via a global fundraising campaign called "the adoption of warphans by foreign nationals." The NARC mobilized far-flung networks of elite diasporic Chinese who utilized their multicultural knowledge and transnational social networks to promote and coordinate the adoption program on a global scale. The chapter analyzes the discursive and material practices—and global administrative structures—through which Chinese children and their foreign adopters attempted to build meaningful "adoptive" relationships across national, racial, and linguistic divides under conditions of global war. Nearly two decades before the first systematic programs for legal international adoption, the NARC popularized the idea of adopting Asian children as a distinct form of humanitarian rescue and transnational family formation.

In the years following WWII, American transnational child welfare organizations dramatically expanded the adoption plan to fundraise for their own child welfare work in China and across Asia—transforming the practices of global intimacy developed in WWII China into central features of the global humanitarian order. Chapter two focuses on how an American Christian philanthropy named China's Children Fund ("CCF") built the adoption plan into one of the most successful humanitarian programs in postwar Asia by unabashedly commoditizing Chinese children. In the United States, the CCF marketed the adoption plan by innovatively weaving together the discourses of universal Christian love, American responsibility to Asia, and the moral imperative of motherhood. At the same time, the CCF's overseas headquarters in Guangzhou could only meet the unprecedented demand for high-quality photographs, detailed information, and substantive letters from adopted children through the mass production of standardized documents and rigid adherence to administrative procedures—a paradoxical

phenomenon I call the "bureaucracy of global intimacy." The chapter concludes by tracing the CCF's expansion to Japan and Korea, where it played a crucial role in developing the first systematic programs for legal international adoption during the 1950s.

The Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949 was among the most important events in the global history of humanitarianism. When the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, rather than dismiss the adoption plan as a tool of the reactionary Nationalist Party and their American imperialist allies, they instead sought to transform it into the centerpiece of a new form of "revolutionary humanitarianism." Chapter three uses the case study of the PLAN China Branch to examine how Chinese child welfare workers mobilized the sentimental ties between children and their foster parents to meet the new ideological and material needs of the revolution. Under the rubric of "people's diplomacy," the PLAN China Branch channeled funding to "progressive" child welfare institutions while encouraging children to write personal narratives of how they had suffered under the American-allied Nationalist regime and were now thriving under the Communists. By showing their foster parents a very different side of the Chinese Communist Revolution from what they read in the newspapers, children's letters could secure urgently needed funding while helping to build ideological support for the revolution abroad.

Nevertheless, during the Korean War the Communist Party ultimately decided to dismantle all foreign humanitarian work in China. Rather than transforming children into "people's diplomats," in the context of the Korean War the adoption plan instead appeared to have created a sizeable cohort of children both emotionally and economically indebted to China's greatest ideological and military enemy—the United States. Tracing the efforts of the newly created People's Relief Administration of China ("PRAC") to uproot all foreign humanitarian activity in China, Chapter four analyzes how the intimate ties forged between

children and their foster parents became potent symbols of how humanitarianism functioned as a "cloak" for imperialist encroachment. I argue that the Communist Party's decision to cut off all foreign humanitarian aid to China fundamentally reshaped the geopolitics of humanitarianism in East Asia, foreclosing the possibility of a humanitarianism of international solidarity and ushering in a new age of "Cold War humanitarianism." Eventually forced to leave China, humanitarian organizations redistributed aid to East Asian Cold War hotspots such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, where they reimagined the adoption plan as building sentimental bonds between the United States and its Cold War allies.

After the dismantling of the global humanitarian project in early 1950s China, many of the Chinese and foreign humanitarian workers who had administered the adoption plan utilized their multilingual skills and transnational social networks to forge new careers in the burgeoning field of international propaganda. Chapter five follows the careers of several of the most important figures from the transnational aid organizations that had formerly coordinated the adoption plan in China as they developed new careers in China's international propaganda industry. I argue that these figures played key roles in transforming practices of "people's diplomacy" developed through the adoption plan—such as the transnational exchange of family letters, the iconography of suffering war orphans, and the cultivation of transnational intimate relations to ameliorate international relations—into hallmarks of international propaganda during the Mao era. The chapter highlights an irony at the heart of Mao-period international propaganda: it relied upon missionary and humanitarian networks to propagate its critique of the missionary and humanitarian enterprises in China. The conclusion briefly considers the contemporary phenomenon of legal international adoption from China to analyze the continued significance of global intimacy in mediating China's relationship with the world today.

A Note on Names

To avoid identifying children and foster parents whose names do not appear in published sources, I have either used personal names only (omitting family names) or otherwise changed their names. I generally use the Pinyin romanization system for Chinese terms with the exception of proper nouns that are more familiar in English by other spellings (e.g., Madame Chiang Kai-shek). I have also chosen to retain the romanized spellings of children's (personal) names as they appear in archival records and/or in correspondence with their foster parents.

CHAPTER I

"A Letter Written By Your Own Hand": China's WWII and the Intimate Turn in Global Humanitarianism

On December 1, 1939 a woman named Gladys from the dairy farming district of Matamata, New Zealand wrote a letter to a Chinese boy named Chi Ming, whom she referred to as her "foster son," although they had never met in person. Her letter begins like this:

> It will be strange to you to receive a letter from New Zealand and you will wonder about the people who are writing to you. Perhaps you know that friends in New Zealand are trying to help China and especially its boys and girls. We are told that we can help you. Your photograph has recently been sent to us so we know what you look like. We do not know what part of China you come from or even where you are living…This, our first letter to you, is to welcome you into our family.[61]

Gladys had donated £4 to "adopt" Chi Ming through a Chinese child welfare organization called the National Association for Refugee Children (*zhan shi ertong bayou hui* 戰時兒童保育會; "NARC").[62] The largest child welfare organization in wartime China, the NARC was founded by a group of elite Chinese women—including the first lady of Nationalist China, Madame Chiang Kai-shek—to provide succor to the mass numbers of children rendered homeless after the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan in 1937. Over the course of the war, the NARC funded and operated dozens of orphanage-schools (*baoyu yuan* 保育院), dubbed "warphanages" in English-language publicity materials, that provided food, shelter, and education to more than 30,000 "warphans." In order to fund its ambitious child welfare program, the NARC launched a global fundraising campaign called "the adoption of warphans by foreign nationals" in which

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[61] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui banli waiguo juankuan jiaoyang ertong deng xiang de wenshu 戰時兒童保育會辦理外國捐款教養兒童等項的文書 [National Association for Refugee Children Documents on Handling Foreign Contributions, Children's Education, and Other Matters], 11-4238, 46-59, *Second Historical Archives of China* (hereinafter "SHAC").

[62] "Chinese Refugees Fund Now £9460," *Evening Post*, August 22, 1940, 5.

private citizens around the world "adopted" individual Chinese children by paying their expenses at NARC warphanages on an annual basis. Under the adoption model, foreign "adopters" were invited to build personal relationships with their Chinese "adoptees" through the exchange of photographs, gifts, and translated letters that used familial terms of address. Gladys was one of thousands of individuals across the world, the majority of them women, who adopted a Chinese warphan through the NARC's program.

Gladys's rather self-aware and sensitive letter makes explicit an aspect of the adoption program that often went unspoken: the utter strangeness of a Chinese child receiving a letter from a foreign stranger who knew little about him and yet claimed to be his foster mother. And much as Gladys imagined, children at first often did find it befuddling—alarming, even—to receive such letters. One boy named Kuo-hwa recounted his initial confusion upon receiving his sponsor's first letter: "When I was playing most happily, a child suddenly came in from outside carrying the letter and the lovely picture you gave me. After I looked at them, at first I simply could not understand what was really going on."[63] Nevertheless, in many cases both children and their sponsors overcame this initial unfamiliarity to build meaningful adoptive relationships. By the end of her lengthy letter, Gladys had already come to feel deeply for Chi Ming. She concludes, "Now we think of you as our foster-son and send you our love as we would if you were our son indeed and hope you are well. We want you to try and forget the sadness of the past and to look forward with hope. We shall be thinking much about you, and eagerly await news of you." Likewise, Kuo-hwa's confusion upon receiving his foster mother's letter was soon replaced with sheer joy: "After listening to many friends' explanations, my mood

[63] 11-4238, 184-188, *SHAC*.

eventually started to improve slowly. It turns out that you have already adopted me as your foster son. This made me very delighted! My dear foster mother! I am so happy!"

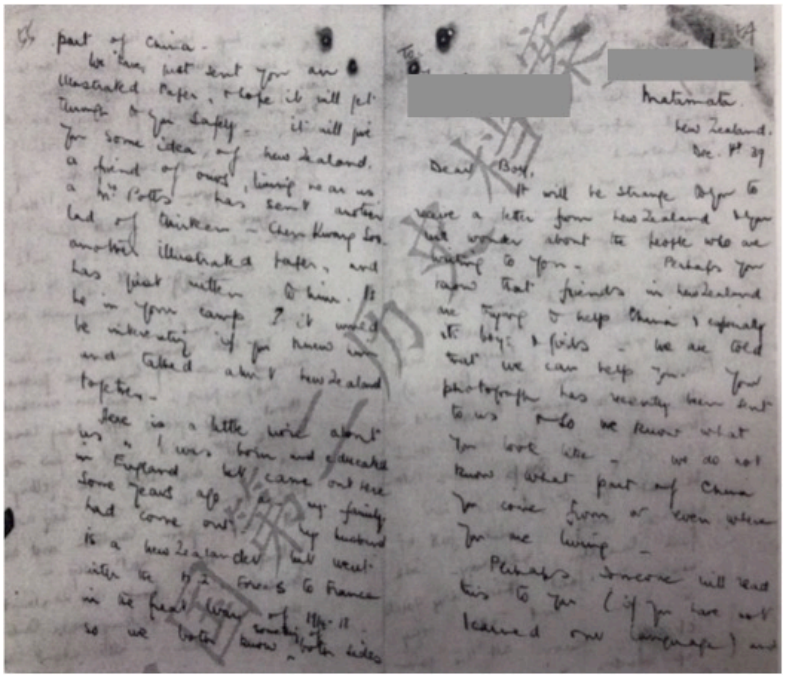

Figure 1.1. Letter from Gladys of Matamata, New Zealand to her "adopted" child Chi Ming, December 1, 1939. 11-4238, 47, *SHAC*.

What new humanitarian ideals and global administrative structures made it both desirable and feasible for women like Gladys to "adopt" children like Chi Ming during the WWII era? What practices of writing, translation, and gift exchange facilitated meaningful communication between Chinese children and foreign adults who came from societies with radically different (and rapidly changing) notions of charity, family, and intimacy? Ultimately, how did the NARC's adoption program enable perfect strangers to imagine themselves as part of transnational adoptive families across national, racial, and linguistic divides?

This chapter uses the NARC's adoption program as a case study to analyze the "intimate turn" in global humanitarian practice that emerged through the fundraising campaigns of

transnational aid organizations working with Chinese refugee children during WWII. I examine how the NARC mobilized an extensive network of overseas Chinese elites who utilized their multicultural knowledge and transnational social connections to promote and coordinate the adoption program on a global scale. Drawing from original letters exchanged between Chinese children and their foreign adopters, I explore the discursive and material practices through which they sought to build personal bonds across geographic and cultural boundaries under conditions of global war. While the NARC worried about the high overhead costs involved in the adoption program, it also appreciated its value as a new form of intimate diplomacy that could bolster international support for China's war with Japan, particularly in the years before Pearl Harbor when China fought essentially alone. The NARC dissolved its operations shortly after WWII, but its popular adoption program helped establish the conditions for the rise of international adoption and child sponsorship as vast global phenomena in the postwar period.

The NARC's program for the adoption of warphans by foreign nationals sheds light on the histories of international adoption and child sponsorship as part of the emergence of a new global humanitarian order during and after WWII. In line with the larger literature on the global expansion of Western humanitarian programs after WWII, previous scholarship has argued that the rise of international adoption and child sponsorship in Cold War East Asia served the foreign policy interests of Western powers. In these narratives, Asia may serve as the setting for humanitarian action, and Asian children are often featured as objects of humanitarian rescue, but the key historical actors are typically Euro-American.[64] This chapter shifts both the chronology and geography of this story. Rather than a simple expansion of Western philanthropic practices

[64] An exception to this pattern that analyzes the local meanings of humanitarianism in Tokugawa Japan through the case of the Japanese Red Cross is Sho Konishi, "The Emergence of an International Humanitarian Organization in Japan: The Tokugawa Origins of the Japanese Red Cross," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 119, No. 4, (2014), 1129-1153.

into China, the NARC's adoption program combined both Chinese and Western charitable traditions and achieved global popularity through a far-flung network of overseas Chinese philanthropists and activists. Specifically, I argue that the remarkable enthusiasm with which white, middle-class couples across the global North embraced the adoption of Asian children as a form of humanitarian rescue in the 1950s was in large part due to the work of the NARC in developing the practices of global intimacy that made it possible to imagine transnational adoptive families consisting of white parents and Asian children. More broadly, I suggest that the post-WWII global humanitarian order was not simply the global expansion of preexisting Western practices, but rather incorporated diverse philanthropic traditions and institutions thrown into contact through imperialism, trade, migration, and war.

Orphanage Competition: Global Humanitarianism and Local Charity in Late Qing China

The intimate turn in global humanitarian practice that emerged during China's WWII was conditioned by historical developments in both Western humanitarian and Chinese philanthropic practices dating to the mid-nineteenth century. Humanitarian interest in China's children followed quickly upon the Opium Wars that violently incorporated China into an unequal world system of commerce, violence, cultural exchange—and philanthropy. After its defeat by Britain in the first Opium War, in 1842 the Qing Dynasty was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing, the first of the infamous "unequal treaties" that ceded Hong Kong to the British, granted extraterritoriality to British citizens, and opened five treaty ports to foreign trade.[65] In short order, the United States, France, and other Western powers concluded similar treaties, all of which included "most favored nation" clauses ensuring that concessions granted to one imperial

[65] The five treaty ports were Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai.

power would be enjoyed by all.[66] This system of unequal treaties enabled increasing numbers of Western travelers, missionaries, academics, and businesspeople to go to China, and among the many reports they sent home were tales of rampant female infanticide driven by poverty and the Confucian preference for sons over daughters. These stories were often exaggerated, and infanticide and infant abandonment were also widespread problems in contemporary Western societies. Nevertheless, it was this perception of female infanticide as a particularly Chinese problem that first made the Chinese child into an object of global pity.[67]

Among the earliest large-scale transnational aid organizations, the French Holy Childhood Association (*l'Oeuvre de la Sainte Enfance*) was the most important in popularizing the cause of saving Chinese babies from infanticide across Europe and North America. Founded in 1843 by the French bishop Charles-Auguste-Marie-Joseph de Forbin Janson, the Holy Childhood Association encouraged European children to donate small monthly sums to rescue and baptize infants in China.[68] The association's most popular fundraising technique were lotteries in which the winner would become the "godparent" of a Chinese baby with the privilege of choosing its baptismal name.[69] Largely due to its ability to foster the sense of a personal bond between Western donors and Chinese children, the Holy Childhood Association achieved

[66] William Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 165-174.

[67] Michelle King, *Between Birth and Death: Female Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

[68] Henrietta Harrison, "'A Penny for the Little Chinese': The French Holy Childhood Association in China, 1843-1951," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 1 (2008), 73. The Holy Child Association placed much more emphasis on saving souls than saving lives, and most of the children it baptized died in orphanage care soon thereafter. See also King, 145-148.

[69] Harrison, 80.

extraordinary fundraising success—reaching an annual income of two million francs by 1869 with membership across Europe and North America.[70]

The north China famine of 1876-1879—among the worst famines in recorded human history with an estimated death toll of nine to thirteen million people—prompted another wave of humanitarian attention on China, much of it again focused on children.[71] Missionary relief workers coordinated large-scale efforts to aid famine victims, and they frequently deployed images of starving children for publicity materials back home.[72] For example, the China Inland Mission's London-based publication, *China's Millions*, published a letter entitled "For the Young: A Letter from Shan-Si" from the missionary A.F. Parrott that sought to cultivate sympathy among British children for their Chinese peers:

> I am sure all of you would pity the poor little boys and girls of this great country if you could but see all that I have seen. They have no homes like most of you have, but live in houses built with mud and reeds; they live on rice, and wheat, and bread, and such things as many of you dislike, and do not get meat and nice cakes as you do; so whenever you hear boy or girl complaining of what they get to eat, just remind them of the poor children in China.[73]

In addition to these international fundraising campaigns, Christian missionaries also founded orphanages on the ground in China. An 1878 survey of Catholic orphanages conducted by Jesuit missionary Gabriel Palatre listed 101 orphanages established since the beginning of the treaty port system in 1842.[74]

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[70] Harrison, 73.

[71] On the history of the North China Famine of 1876-1879, see Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley, *Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth-century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[72] Edgerton-Tarpley, 125-129.

[73] A.F. Parrott, "For the Young: A Letter from Shan-Si," *China's Millions* (1879), 145-146.

[74] King, 152.

However, the proliferation of foreign orphanages in China led to intense conflicts with local populations skeptical of their motives. The most explosive of these conflicts erupted in Tianjin in the summer of 1870, when rumors spread that the Catholic orphanage was kidnapping children to gouge out their eyes and hearts for use in medicine. After a heated confrontation with local officials, the French consul shot and killed a servant of the local magistrate, setting off a mass riot in which 20 foreigners and an unknown number of Chinese Christians were killed.[75] The Tianjin Massacre underscored the intense hostility of many local Chinese to foreign humanitarian efforts on behalf of Chinese children, providing urgency to efforts to develop native philanthropy to obviate the need for such foreign institutions.

During the late nineteenth century, private charity (*yi zhen* 義賑) gradually replaced government aid (*huang zheng* 荒政) as the primary source of disaster relief and social welfare provisioning in China.[76] The historian Zhu Hu has argued that the challenge posed by the growth of Western charitable institutions was "the most fundamental reason" for the expansion of private philanthropy in China—a phenomenon Michelle King has called "orphanage competition."[77] Nevertheless, if competition from foreign orphanages precipitated the growth of private charities in late Qing China, the specific charitable practices they employed drew as

[75] King, 155-158.

[76] Yang Jianli 楊劍利, "Wanqing Shehui Zaihuang Jiuzhi Gongneng de Yanbian-Yi Dingwu 'qihuang' de Liang Zhong Zhenji Fangshi Weili 晚清社會災荒救治功能的演變—以'丁戊奇荒'的兩種賑濟方式為例 [Changes in Social Disaster Relief in the Late Qing: Taking Two Kinds of Relief Methods During the 'Incredible Famine' of 1877-1878 as Examples]," *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究 [*Studies in Qing History*], No. 4 (2000), 59-64.

[77] Zhu Hu 朱滸, *Difangxing Liudong ji qi Chaoyue: Wanqing Yizhen yu Jiandai Zhongguo de Xinchen Daixie* 地方性流動及其超越：晚清義賑與近代中國的新陳代謝 [The Fluidity and Transcendence of Localism: Late-Qing Charitable Relief and the Supersession of the Old by the New in Modern China] (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2006), 525; King, 151-155.

much from local philanthropic traditions in the Jiangnan region as from foreign institutions.[78] In response to mass refugee flight during the Taiping Civil War (1850-1864), Jiangnan philanthropists coordinated trans-regional relief projects that utilized sentimental language and visual images of suffering to cultivate moral responsibility for social welfare beyond the local community.[79] The renowned philanthropist Yu Zhi noted, "it is difficult to persuade people to donate, how much more difficult if they have not witnessed or heard the suffering in person."[80] To solve this problem, Yu believed it was necessary for the donors and recipients of charity to "establish affective or communal connections that mirror those of family, lineage, and village."[81] One way to achieve this was through the visual depiction of suffering children. For example, Yu's *A Man's Tears of Iron for Jiangnan* contains vivid illustrations of infanticide, the selling of children, and destitute children begging for help.[82] The specific content of Yu's appeals drew from Chinese Buddhist representations of hell, Confucian morality texts, and traditional depictions of natural disasters in China.[83] Nevertheless, much like the Holy Childhood Association, his appeals sought to foster emotional ties with needy children through familial metaphors and visual images of suffering.

Building upon these efforts, during the north China famine of the late 1870s elite Jiangnan philanthropists launched a national-scale relief effort unprecedented in scope that led to

[78] Zhu, 172-186; 523

[79] Tobie Meyer-Fong, *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in 19th Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[80] Meyer-Fong, 52.

[81] Meyer-Fong, 49.

[82] Meyer-Fong, 51-62.

[83] Meyer-Fong, 52.

further innovations in Chinese philanthropic practice.[84] Perhaps the most groundbreaking feature of their fundraising campaigns was the use of the Chinese-language press to publicize the work of private relief organizations, encourage donations, and publish lists of contributors.[85] Another highly significant fundraising innovation was the *yuan* (願) system of donation, in which a small sum of money was fixed as one *yuan*, and donors were encouraged to contribute as many *yuan* as possible according to their means. Some charitable institutions even specified the number of *yuan* required to care for one child for one year. For example, one charitable institution in Kunshan advertised: "Each *yuan* is 600 cash; six *yuan* saves one life."[86] While Zhu Hu argues that the highly popular *yuan* system possessed "Jiangnan characteristics," the strategy of collecting small donations from a mass base of ordinary people again recalls the fundraising techniques of the Holy Childhood Association that were achieving widespread popularity around the same time.[87] Although Western and Chinese charitable appeals remained very different in their specific discursive and visual strategies, both deployed sentimental language, familial metaphors, and images of child suffering to attract donors beyond the local community. China's involvement in the violent global conflicts of the twentieth century would give rise to a new crop of transnational aid organizations that drew from both of these philanthropic traditions as they sought to meet the unprecedented child welfare needs of the new century.

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[84] Edgerton-Tarpley, 131-155.

[85] Mary Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 144-145.

[86] On the *yuan* donation system, see Zhu, 172-176. The most popular incarnation was known as the "one cash yuan" (*yi wen yuan* 一文願) system, in which the equivalent of one cash per day for one year (360 cash) was set as the value one yuan.

[87] Zhu, 174.

The Adoption Scheme

Among the most successful humanitarian fundraising techniques of the modern era, what is now called "child sponsorship"—in which a donor contributes the amount of money required to support an individual child for a fixed period of time—has antecedents in both Chinese and Western philanthropy. Within China, philanthropic fundraising practices resembling modern child sponsorship date to the 1870s, when local infant protection societies (*baoying she* 保嬰社) implemented a new fundraising strategy known as the "adoption system" (*renyu zhi* 認育制) in which donors made monthly contributions to sustain the care of one or more babies.[88] In 1873, a Rugao County gazetteer noted that at one foundling hospital (*yuying tang* 育嬰堂) donors had "contributed funds to adopt from two or three to more than 10 babies." As a result, the number of infants the hospital could support increased from only 68 to more than 200.[89] The adoption system was also popular in Taixing, where in 1871 the infant protection bureau noted, "Gentry, merchants, scholars, and commoners have according to their ability variously adopted (*ren juan* 認捐) from one or two to more than ten infants."[90] According to regulations issued by the General Infant Protection Bureau in Jiading, all people who participated in the adoption system

[88] Liang Qizi 梁其姿 [Angela Ki Che Leung], *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming qing shiqi de cishan zuzhi* 施善與教化：明清時期的慈善組織 [Charitable Works and Moral Education: Benevolent Institutions During the Ming and Qing Dynasties], (Taibei Shi: Lian Jing Chuban Shiye Gongsi, 1997), 200; Angela Ki Che Leung, "Relief Institutions for Children in Nineteenth-Century China," in Anne Behnke Kinney, ed., *Chinese Views of Childhood* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 260.

[89] Juegangchang yuying tang tongzhi qi nian dashi wang rujin chongxiu 掘港場育嬰堂同治七年大使王汝金重修 [*Juegangchang* Foundling Hospital Renovated by Envoy Wang Rujin in the Seventh Year of the Tongzhi Reign], *Rugao xian xuzhi* 如皋縣續志 [Supplementary Gazetteer of Rugao County] (1873).

[90] Baoying ju guangxu yuan nian yiren zhu liancheng deng fushe pan gui pu ying tang zhangcheng 保嬰局光緒元年邑人朱連城等附設攀桂鋪嬰堂章程 [Regulations of the Infant Protection Bureau *Pan Gui Pu* Infant Hall Founded by Townsperson Zhu Liancheng and others in the First Year of the Guangxu Reign], *Taixing xian zhi* 泰興縣志 [Taixing Gazetteer] (1885).

would have "a red label affixed to their home door announcing how many lives [they were sponsoring]." The regulations further noted, "Recently this method has been widely used."[91]

In the Western context, the earliest known child sponsorship programs were founded during and after WWI. When American soldiers arrived in northern France in 1917, some spontaneously offered to become the "daddies" of the children of French soldiers who had died in the war by making monthly financial contributions to their widowed mothers. Soon expanded into a large-scale initiative, by Christmas 1918 American soldiers had sponsored 3,444 French children.[92] The following year, the British Save the Children Fund launched its first sponsorship program on behalf of German and Austrian children affected by the Allied blockade. Referring to British sponsors as "foster parents," its publicity materials promised, "When the child is put in touch with his adopter and letters are exchanged, valuable links are formed between land and land which…bear no unimportant part in realising the unity of the world."[93] Despite their internationalist rhetoric, however, these early sponsorship programs targeted white, male, Christian children of middle class origin—whom British and American sponsors believed were better "investments" because they were more likely to grow up to become productive citizens.[94]

The first transnational aid organization to attempt to use child sponsorship to fundraise for child welfare work in China was an American organization called China Child Welfare. Founded in New York in 1928, China Child Welfare raised money for the work of a Chinese organization called the National Child Welfare Association (*zhonghua ciyou xiehui* 中華慈幼協

[91] Jiading baoying zongju banfa ge xian xiang cun jianbian zhangcheng 嘉定保嬰總局頒發各縣鄉村簡便章程 [Brief Regulations Distributed to Each County, Township, and Village by the Jiading General Infant Protection Bureau], *Jiangsu sheng li san bian* 江蘇省例三篇 [Provincial Regulations of Jiangsu Third Edition] (1883).

[92] Baughan, 196.

[93] Baughan, 197.

[94] Baughan, 199-204.

會; hereinafter "NCWA").[95] In its publicity materials, China Child Welfare often advertised that "Thirty dollars will provide adequate care for one child for a year."[96] However, in a spontaneous manner that resembled U.S. soldiers' offers to be the "daddies" of French children during WWI, individual donors wrote to China Child Welfare hoping to establish personal contact with a Chinese child. For example, a man named Thomas from Detroit, Michigan donated $10 but suggested that he would contribute $40-50 annually if he could receive a letter from the child benefiting from his contribution.[97] One American couple read a newspaper account of a man in Shandong who had attempted to sell his son and sent China Child Welfare a check for $10 with the rather implausible request that it be used to save that specific boy.[98] China Child Welfare forwarded such requests to the NCWA in China, acknowledging "all the additional work" they created but nevertheless insisting, "these friendship contacts will be most profitable through the years to come."[99] However, the NCWA does not appear to have responded to any of them. When Peggy Dougherty of China Child Welfare traveled to China to meet with NCWA leaders, she reported:

> The question of the adoption of the children by people in America was never understood by the Committee of the National Child Welfare Association of China. When I explained to them that it did not mean locating a child and getting its history and picture, but that it meant simply selecting from those we were caring for the best looking one and taking his or her photo and getting a small history and sending those to you, and that you in turn would send the money to the Association to be used in paying the orphanage for the child

[95] "Proposed Agreement Between The National Child Welfare Association of China and China Child Welfare," 1929, Box 4, Folder 8, United China Relief Records, New York Public Library (*UCRR*); On the history of China Child Welfare, Inc., see Margaret Tillman, "Precocious Politics: Preschool Education and Child Protection in China, 1903-1953," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley (2013), 131-139.

[96] See for example, "Bringing Health to China's Little Ones," *Frederick News-Post*, March 20, 1930, 11.

[97] Letter to Garfield Huang, August 27, 1928, Box 4, Folder 5, *UCRR*.

[98] Letter to Garfield Huang, August 27, 1928, Box 4, Folder 5, *UCRR*.

[99] Letter to Garfield Huang, January 15, 1929, Box 4, Folder 6, *UCRR*.

> as designated funds instead of covering the support of such a selected child out of the general funds of the organization, they were quite satisfied.

Nevertheless, Dougherty quickly realized the immense difficulties that would be involved in obtaining photographs of Chinese children. Her report added, "It is not possible to get pictures in these localities. The children run away from the camera and the adults drive the photographer off. For these reasons I had no success in getting pictures though I tried it many times."[100] International child sponsorship was becoming increasingly popular in Europe, and the financial "adoption" of children had proven a successful fundraising technique in localities across the Jiangnan region of China, yet as of the late 1920s it remained impossible to carry out such programs across the cultural and geographic divides separating Euro-American donors from Chinese children. Within a decade, however, the outbreak of WWII would radically alter the possibilities for implementing humanitarian programs like the adoption scheme on a global scale.

The outbreak of full-scale war with Japan in July 1937 caused a refugee crisis on a scale unprecedented in Chinese history, creating an effectively unlimited need for humanitarian relief. Estimates of the total number of displaced people vary widely, but it is likely that at least 80 million Chinese people were forced from their homes at some point during the war.[101] Although it is impossible to know the exact percentage of these refugees that were children, one survey of nearly 10,000 Hunanese refugees in Sichuan found that 34.1% were under the age of fifteen.[102]

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[100] Peggy Dougherty, "Report of My Trip to China in the Interest of the China Child Welfare, Inc.," H.H. Kung Papers, Hoover Institute (*HHK*). I would like to thank Margaret Tillman for calling my attention to and providing me with a copy of this source.

[101] Estimates of China's wartime refugee population range from as Lloyd Eastman's estimate of 3-4 million people to Ch'i Hsi-sheng's estimate of 95 million people. See Stephen MacKinnon, *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 47-48. More recently, historian Rana Mitter has used the figure of 80 million. See Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 5.

[102] MacKinnon, 50-51.

If that survey is anywhere near representative of the national refugee population, then the number of child refugees was almost certainly in the tens of millions. As heart-wrenching reports of child refugees circulated in newspapers and magazines, saving the nation's children quickly became a national *cause célèbre*, framed both at the time and in popular memory as a way that women especially contributed to the war effort. *Women's Life* magazine (*funü shenghuo* 婦女生活) constantly covered Japanese atrocities against Chinese children. One March 1938 article proclaimed, "Women especially should take up the responsibility and shoulder the burden of practical work. The large-scale child welfare movement can be used to organize refugee women and housewives to use collective scientific methods to care for the children."[103]

In the midst of these urgent rescue efforts, relief institutions for refugee children revived the adoption scheme pioneered by infant protection societies in the late-nineteenth century to fundraise domestically within China. Founded in October 1937, the Shaanxi Branch of the Emergency Refugee Rescue Committee used the adoption method to support both child and adult refugees.[104] Framing its adoption program in a tradition of Chinese voluntarism, the organization claimed that it had decided to "imitate the ancient 'system of voluntary fostering' (*yi hu jiyang zhi* 義戶寄養制) and invite philanthropists from all around to voluntarily foster [refugees] on a long term basis." In contrast to nineteenth-century adoption programs, the

[103] Cao Mengjun 曹孟君, "Jiujiu haizimen 救救孩子們 [Save the Children]," in Li Hong and Xin Bing, ed., *Kang Ri Feng Huo Zhong De Yao Lan: Ji Nian Zhongguo Zhan Shi Er Tong Bao Yu Hui Wen Xuan* 抗日烽火中的搖籃：紀念中國戰時兒童保育會文選 [A Cradle in the Flames of War – Selected Essays Commemorating the Wartime Child Welfare Society], (Beijing: Zhongghuo Funü Chubanshe, 1991), 38-41.

[104] "Guanyu gaozhi feichang shiqi nanmin jiuji weiyuanhui shanxi sheng fenhui chengli yu guanfang qiyong riqi zhi jincheng yinhang de gonghan 關於告知非常時期難民救濟委員會陝西省分會成立與關防啟用日期致金城銀行的公函 [Public Letter Notifying the Kincheng Bank of the Founding Shaanxi Branch of the Emergency Refugee Rescuee Committee and the Date on Which it Commenced Use of an Official Seal]," October 18, 1937, 0304-0001-02195-0000-168-000, *Chongqing Municipal Archives* (hereinafter "*CMA*").

Emergency Refugee Rescue Committee went further in fostering the sense of a personal relationship between donors and refugees. In a letter to a man named Liu Chunzhong who had agreed to "adopt" five people, the organization invited him to come visit the shelter where the beneficiaries were living.[105] They also sent sponsors the name, sex, age, and hometown of the recipients of their donations.[106]

Other Chinese child relief institutions went even further in utilizing the adoption plan to foster a sense of familial intimacy between donors and children within China. For example, as part of its broader fundraising campaign, the China United Council For the Rescue of Children in War Areas sought to "launch a sponsorship movement" on a national scale.[107] According to the Council's guidelines, "The sponsor designates the gender and age of the adopted child so that a photograph can be selected and mailed. Once the child is selected, every semester a copy of the school report card will be sent." The Guizhou branch even invited sponsors to come to their office to personally select among the photographs of children available for "adoption." In language that resembled the advertisements of international child welfare organizations like Save the Children, their appeals emphasized that in addition to material help, sponsorship could also

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[105] "Guanyu renyang nanmin bing jiansong shouyang nanmin xingming, nianji biao zhi liu chuzhong de han 關於認養難民並檢送受養難民姓名、年紀表致劉純中的函 [Letter to Liu Chunzhong Regarding the Adoption of Refugees and Attaching the Name and Age List of the Adopted Refugees]," December 12, 1937, 0304-0001-02195-0000-029-000, *CMA*.

[106] "Peng Zhaoxian guanyu jiansong shanghai shangye chuxu yinhang renyang nanmin xingming nianji biao zhi lu jungu de han 彭昭賢關於檢送上海商業儲蓄銀行認養難民姓名年紀表致陸君穀的函 [Letter from Peng Zhaoxian to Lu Jungu Attaching Name and Age List of the Refugees Adopted by Shanghai Commercial Savings Bank]," 0310-0001-01988-0000-017-000, *CMA*.

[107] "China United Council for the Rescue of Children in War Areas Emergency Child Rescue Work Over the Past Year, Table of Responsible Persons" (中國急救戰區兒童聯合委員會一年來之急救兒童工作、負責人一覽表), 0090-0001-00404-0000-016-000, *CMA*. In some sources, the Chinese name of the organization is listed as 中國急救戰區兒童聯合委員會.

provide "emotional comfort" (*jingshen anwei* 精神安慰) to children.[108] At the Chongqing Relief Institute, donors were encouraged to "adopt" infants and commit to sponsoring them for five years. Sponsors could have their adopted infant take on their surname, and at the end of the five-year period they were encouraged to literally adopt the child into their homes.[109] However, as the child refugee crisis deepened, relief institutions began to look beyond China's borders for desperately needed funds. It was in this context that the NARC experimented with expanding the adoption scheme overseas as a way to rekindle international interest in the far-away plight of China's children.

The National Association for Refugee Children

The NARC was founded on March 10, 1938 at the Saint Lois School For Girls in Hankou in a ceremony attended by more than 700 people.[110] The largest child welfare organization in wartime China, during its eight years of operation the NARC funded a total of 61 "warphanages" that cared for more than 30,000 "warphans."[111] Describing children as "the reserve army of the

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[108] "Letter to Tang Xinru Attaching the Method for the Adoption of Children in War Areas. Method Attached." (關於檢送認養戰區兒童辦法致康心如的函. 附辦法), 0054-0001-00589-0000-105-000, *CMA*.

[109] "Letter to Wu Jinhang Regarding Specifying the Method for Adopting the Infants Taken In at the Chongqing Relief Institute"(關於規定重慶市救濟院收養之嬰兒認養辦法致吳晉航的函), 0300-0001-00255-0000-080-000, *CMA*.

[110] Ertong bayou hui zuo chengli—jiang furen deng qin chuxi zhici—shuoming baohu jiaoyang ertong zhi biyao 兒童保育會昨成立——蔣夫人等親出席致詞——說明保護教養兒童之必要, [National Association for Refugee Children Founded Yesterday—Madame Chiang and Others Personally Attend and Make Remarks—Explain the Importance of Protecting and Educating Children], *Ta Gung Pao* (Hankou Edition), March 11, 1938, 3.

[111] For the institutional history of the NARC, see Zhang Chun (張純), *Kangri zhanzheng shiqi zhan shi ertong bayouhui yanjiu* 抗日戰爭時期戰時兒童保育會研究 [Research on the National Association for Refugee Children During the War of Resistance Against Japan], (Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe, 2015). On the shifting numbers of NARC warphanages over the course of the war, see Zhang, 157-158. On the difficulties of estimating the number of children cared for in NARC institutions, see Zhang 208-210. After careful analysis, Zhang concludes, "We have reason to believe that the number of children taken in by the NARC during its eight years of work probably exceeds 30,000."

nation's liberation," the NARC emphasized not only rescuing children but also providing them with the modern education and training necessary to become the brave soldiers and "new citizens" who would win the war and reconstruct the nation.[112] While the NARC was a united front organization that included Nationalists, Communists, and those affiliated with neither party among its leadership, it was also deeply enmeshed within a network of Nationalist-led women's relief organizations all headquartered in the wartime capital of Chongqing.[113] Song Meiling (more popularly known as Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the first lady of Nationalist China) served as the organization's president. The charismatic, Wellesley-educated daughter of a prominent Chinese Methodist family, Madame Chiang was among the most famous women in the world, and she used her work with war orphans to cultivate her own global cult of personality as well as to bolster the international reputation of the Nationalist Party.

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[112]"Zhongguo funü weilao ziwei kangzhan jiangshi zonghui zhanshi ertong baoyuhui xuanyan 中國婦女慰勞自衛抗戰將士總會戰時兒童保育會宣言 [Manifesto of the National Chinese Women's Association for War Relief Association for Refugee Children]," *Ta Gung Pao* (Hankou Edition), March 10, 1938, 4; Cao, "Jiujiu haizimen." On the NARC's distinct approaches to child welfare and education, see Zhang, 255-290; and Norman Apter, "Saving the Young: A History of the Child Relief Movement in Modern China," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles (2013), 149-181.

[113] Scholarship on the NARC has largely been shaped by contemporary politics. Until the mid-1980s, the NARC was so closely associated with Madame Chiang and the Nationalist Party that many former warphans concealed their personal histories for fear of being labeled one of "Madame Chiang's little spies" (宋美齡的小特務). During the late 1980s, however, prominent Communist women such as Deng Yingchao who had participated in the NARC began claiming that Communists had played the leading role in its founding—and that Madame Chiang Kai-shek was essentially a figurehead brought in for political cover. While this reinterpretation has enabled former warphans to publicly commemorate their wartime experiences, it downplays the extent to which the NARC did in fact serve Nationalist priorities. The NARC was initially founded under the auspices of the National Chinese Women's Association for War Relief (中國婦女慰勞自衛抗戰將士總會), an organization founded by Madame Chiang in August 1937 to unite existing women's groups to perform the "work on the home front" that would contribute to "ultimate victory" over Japan. However, in May 1938 the Women's Advisory Committee for the New Life Movement (新生活運動促進總會婦女指導委員會) was reorganized and expanded to be the preeminent organization coordinating women's wartime relief work, and the NARC was administratively reclassified as among its subordinate organizations. Nevertheless, the distinctions among the three organizations remained blurry—they shared office space, and the same group of elite women held leadership positions in all three groups. While the NARC operated independently, it closely collaborated with these other large-scale relief organizations all under the ultimate authority of Madame Chiang. See Zhang, 51-70; "Jiang furen yanjiang 蔣夫人演講 [Madame Chiang's Speech]," *Ta Gung Pao* (Shanghai Edition), August 2, 1937, 4; Helen M. Schneider, "Mobilising women: The Women's Advisory Council, Resistance, and Reconstruction During China's War with Japan," *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2012), 220-223.

Throughout the war, the most pressing problem facing the NARC was how to secure the funds necessary to shelter, clothe, feed, and educate the tens of thousands of children under its care. Despite the Nationalist government's sincere commitment to wartime relief work, it had limited resources with which to fund ambitious social welfare projects. The Nationalists' retreat from eastern China into the interior had cut off many crucial sources of state income, including duties collected by the Chinese Maritime Customs Service. Between 1937 and 1939, annual government revenues fell by 63% while expenditures increased by 33%.[114] From its founding in March 1938 through June 1943, the NARC received only approximately 26.3% of its funding from Chinese government sources, primarily via the newly created National Relief Commission (*zhenji weiyuanhui* 振濟委員會) that served as the highest government body coordinating and funding wartime relief work. The rest of the NARC's funding—approximately 73.7%—came from private donations.[115]

Especially during the early years of the war, the NARC attracted a significant portion of those donations from within China through its own domestic child sponsorship program. In one widely published appeal, Madame Chiang Kai-shek called upon Chinese citizens to contribute to the relief effort by sponsoring children:

> The National Association for Refugee Children's fundraising movement is now underway. We estimate that to provide the most basic clothing, food, and shelter for one child for one year requires about 60 *yuan*. We are now beseeching our compatriots: every person according to his or her ability assume the responsibility for paying the expenses to foster several children. Our initial target is to foster 20,000 children.[116]

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[114] Mitter, 182.

[115] Zhang, 130.

[116] Song Meiling 宋美齡, "Jin wei nantong qingming 謹為難童請命 [A Sincere Appeal to Save the Children]," *Funü Shenghuo* 婦女生活 [*Women's Life Magazine*], No. 11 (March 1938), 2.

In order to encourage wide participation in the sponsorship program, the leaders of the NARC personally "sponsored" large numbers of children: Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek sponsored 200 children, Guo Xiuyi sponsored 442 children, and Li Dequan sponsored 511 children.[117] Their promotional efforts achieved at least modest success. As of 1939, at least 3,240 people in China were sponsoring one or more children at the rate of 60 *yuan* per year.[118]

Nevertheless, the vast majority of donations to the NARC came from abroad. From the outset, the NARC recognized the importance of international fundraising to its philanthropic and political goals. A January 1938 article outlined the need to "expand international publicity" so that "our overseas compatriots and those people of all countries who stand for humanitarian justice" would "know the true brutality of our enemy, sympathize with us, provide us with practical aid, and also encourage their own governments to impose effective sanctions on our perverse and violent enemy."[119] Throughout the war, donations from abroad constituted the NARC's single most important revenue source. As Zhang Aizhen wrote in 1944, "flipping through the donation books, about seven or eight out of ten are sent from abroad (including

[117] Zhang, 140.

[118] Tang Guozhen 唐國楨, "Zhongguo funü weilao ziwei kangzhan jiangshi zonghui zhanshi ertong baoyuhui gongzuo baogao 中國婦女慰勞自衛抗戰將士總會暫時兒童保育會工作報告 [National Chinese Women's Association for War Relief Association for Refugee Children Work Report]," *Funü tanhuahui gongzuo baobao* 婦女談話會工作報告 [Women's Symposium Work Report] (1939), 23.

[119] Xu Jingping 徐鏡平, "Guanyu zhanshi ertong baoyuhui de choubei qingkuang 關於戰時兒童保育會的籌備情況 [Regarding the Status of Preparations for the National Association for Refugee Children]," in *Kangri fenghuo zhong de yaolan*, 60.

overseas Chinese)."[120] Underscoring the global scope of NARC fundraising, its records show donations in 13 different foreign currencies.[121]

The Adoption of Warphans by Foreign Nationals

At the heart of the NARC's global fundraising campaign was an effort to expand its child sponsorship work overseas through the creation of a program called "the adoption of warphans by foreign nationals."[122] The adoption program sought to attract donors from across the world by offering them the opportunity to receive photographs, progress reports, and personal letters from the children they sponsored. A set of 13 regulations governing the NARC's adoption program that was distributed widely to potential donors included the following provisions:

> 6. The Adopters shall continue to support the Adoptees for a period of five years at the least. The expenses of this support may be paid in one lump sum or in several annual installments of not less than $20 (American currency) each…
>
> 10. The Society shall send reports in English of the progress and condition of the Adoptees, together with photographs of them to the Adopters once a year.
>
> 11. The Society shall ask all Adoptees to write to their respective Adopters once a year and these Chinese letters shall be translated and forwarded to the Adopters respectively.[123]

[120] Zhang Aizhen 張藹真, "Ertong baoyuhui liu zhounian jinian ganyan 兒童保育會六週年紀念感言 [Reflections on the Sixth Anniversary of the National Association for Refugee Children]," *Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui liu zhounian jiniankan* 戰時兒童保育會六週年紀念刊 [Memorial Volume for the Sixth Anniversary of the National Association for Refugee Children] (1944), 22.

[121] "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui baoguan weiyuanhui shouzhi jiusan 戰時兒童保育會保管委員會收支計算 [National Association for Refugee Children Custodian's Income and Expense Calculations]," in *Zhanshi ertong Baoyuhui Liu Zhounian Jinankan*, 68.

[122] 11-4234, 130-135, *SHAC*.

[123] Wang Sheng Chih, "Refugee Children in China," *Malaya Tribune*, October 14, 1939, 4.

Although not always implemented to the letter, the NARC's published regulations show how the adoption program was *intended* to operate so as to build personal relationships between adopters and the warphans in whom they had made significant, long-term financial commitments.

In the early months after the founding of the NARC, Madame Chiang Kai-shek personally promoted the adoption program in cables and letters to prominent donors and relief organizations abroad. On June 17, 1938, the United Council for Civilian Relief in China held a fundraising party in New York's Chinatown attended by more than 10,000 people. Madame Chiang sent a cable to be read out loud at the party in which she urged Americans to "vicariously adopt little Chinese children and thus acquire merit upon earth and Grace of Heaven."[124] From that point forward, the NARC often promoted the adoption program in its American publicity materials. A 1940 "Christmas Message from Madame Chiang Kai-shek" asked, "Will you adopt or sponsor a war orphan?"[125] One illustrated booklet titled "A Letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek to Boys and Girls Across the Ocean" likewise included photographs of smiling boys at play with captions such as "I'm happy now. I've just been adopted!"[126]

However, it was in New Zealand where the NARC's adoption program was implemented earliest and most enthusiastically. On June 4, 1938, *The Press* ran an article that described the New Zealand people's sympathy for the "many thousand Chinese children" orphaned by the war with Japan and noted that "a movement is now afoot to raise funds to 'adopt' a certain number of children by paying for their upkeep, the amount being computed at £4 a year for each child." The article acknowledged that the idea of "adopting" Chinese children had reached New Zealand

[124] "25,000 Throng to Chinatown for Rice Bowl Party: Mme. Chiang, in Greeting, Appeals to Americans to Adopt Chinese Orphans to 'Acquire Merit on Earth'," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 18, 1938, 5.

[125] "A Christmas Message from Madame Chiang Kai-Shek" (1940).

[126] *A Letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek to Boys and Girls Across the Ocean* (Chongqing: China Information Publishing Company, 1940).

through a letter that Madame Chiang Kai-shek had sent to the New Zealand Branch of the Chinese Women's Relief Association:

> There are tens of thousands of war orphans who are destitute, homeless, and uncared-for. Our women here have undertaken, as a first step, to arrange to care for 20,000 of these little ones. I am wondering whether it would be possible for women in New Zealand and their colleagues to raise funds for this project. They might try to interest various towns and cities to 'adopt' a certain number of orphans by paying for their upkeep, and if such a plan could be carried out we shall be glad to send a group of photographs of the children "adopted".[127]

Three weeks later, on the evening of June 24, a collection of prominent New Zealand citizens gathered in Wellington to form the New Zealand Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children, tasked with "the organisation on a Dominion-wide scale of an appeal for funds to 'adopt' Chinese refugee children by providing £4 a year for their upkeep." The Honorable W.E. Barnard, speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, was appointed chairman, and other executive officers were selected among prominent business, philanthropic, academic, and religious leaders.[128] The Council was extraordinarily successful, raising more than £13,000 through the adoption program during the course of the war.[129] The New Zealand press was also instrumental in promoting its fundraising efforts. Hundreds of articles in newspapers such as *The Evening Post, The Press, The New Zealand Herald*, and *The Auckland Star* offered highly

[127] "Chinese Orphans: Proposed 'Adoption' By New Zealanders – Madame Chiang Kai-shek's Appeal," *The Press* (June 4, 1938).

[128] "Adoption Plan Helping Chinese Children: Appeal Launched in Wellington," *The Press* (June 24, 1938).

[129] Letter from F.W. Furkert, October 13, 1948, Papers Relating to Chinese Orphans, MS-Papers-5960-8, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand (hereinafter "ATL"). After New Zealand's entry into WWII in September 1939 the Council decided that it would no longer make special appeals but that it would continue to receive and transmit funds from people who wished to continue with their adoptions. See "Refugee Chinese Children," *The Evening Post* (July 19, 1943).

flattering depictions of the Council's work. The *Evening Post* even printed the names of contributors along with the amounts they had donated.[130]

Among New Zealand's most prominent Chinese citizens, the Chinese Consul to New Zealand, Feng Wang, and his wife, known as "Madame Feng Wang," the president of the Wellington Branch of the Chinese Women's War Relief Association, played important roles in promoting the adoption plan across New Zealand. On June 4, 1938 *The Press* published an interview with Feng Wang in which he expressed enthusiastic support for the adoption program:

> "The Association for War Refugee Children in China, which was sponsored by Madame Chiang Kai-shek, is now making a drive for funds. They estimate that it will cost 60 Chinese dollars, which is approximately £4 in New Zealand currency, to house, feed, clothe, and educate in a simple way one child for a year…The people of New Zealand, with their intense love of children and their strong sense of humanity, will naturally not fail to give a response to Madame Chiang's appeal."[131]

Madame Feng Wang was appointed an *ex officio* member of the New Zealand Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children, and over the next two years she worked tirelessly on its behalf—promoting the adoption program via radio broadcasts and on a speaking tour across New Zealand.[132] In a speech delivered on August 5, 1938, Madame Feng Wang implored:

> I am sure that, with the splendid efforts of the council and with the kind support of the people of this Dominion, New Zealand will play a leading part in the accomplishment of this great humanitarian work. I am also sure that those who give towards the fund will be making a real contribution to the building up of a new generation in China, and, on the other hand, those little ones who have been "adopted" will not forget the great kindness that has been extended to them by their foster-parents in this fair Dominion.[133]

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[130] "Chinese 'Adoption' Refugee Fund," *The Evening Post* (August 25, 1938).

[131] "Chinese Orphans: Proposed 'Adoption' By New Zealanders – Madame Chiang Kai-shek's Appeal," *The Press* (June 4, 1938).

[132] "Broadcasting: Today's Programmes," *Evening Post* (August 5, 1938); "Funds for Chinese Refugees," *The Press* (September 21, 1938).

[133] "'Adoption' Plan – Chinese Children: Appeal by Consul's Wife," *The Evening Post* (August 6, 1938).

On November 22, 1939, an *Evening Post* article offered an appraisal of the impact of her efforts: "Madame Feng Wang's lectures on behalf of the 'adoption fund' aroused enthusiasm throughout New Zealand, and were responsible for raising a good part of the £9000 donated in little over a year."[134] Madame Feng Wang also worked to forge connections between the NARC and fundraising groups in New Zealand. She remitted funds on behalf of the Wellington Chinese Women's Relief Association and wrote personally to Madame Chiang Kai-shek requesting signed photographs for the committee members of the New Zealand Council.[135] She was one of many overseas Chinese leaders across the world that played a crucial role in promoting and coordinating the adoption program.

Chinese Migrant Networks and the Globalization of the Adoption Program

The NARC relied upon elite diasporic Chinese to quickly build a global base of donors through the adoption program. Between March 1938 and March 1940, the organization attracted at least 3,500 sponsors from across the United States, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. As of March 1940, New Zealand was the adoption program's leading source of donors (1,094), followed by Indonesia (879), the United States (436), British Malaya (421), France (376), the Netherlands (100), Australia (90), and England (54).[136] In each of these locations, prominent overseas Chinese took the lead in forming "cooperating organizations" (*xie zhu tuanti* 協助團體)

[134] "An Attraction: Madame Feng Wang To Speak," *Evening Post* (November 22, 1939)

[135] "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui wei renyang ertong deng shixiang zhi guowai de xuanchuan ziliao ji baogao 戰時兒童保育會為認養兒童等事項致國外的宣傳資料及報告 [National Association for Refugee Children Publicity Materials and Reports Sent Abroad for the Adoption of Children and Other Matters]," 11-4230, 109-11, *SHAC*.

[136] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui ge yuan 1942 nian suiyue ertong renshu biao, 1938 nian zhi 1940 nian renyang ertong nianling tongji biao ji you guan wenshu 戰時兒童保育會各院一九四二年逐月兒童人數表，一九三八至一九四零年認養兒童年齡統計表及有關文書 [1942 Tables of Number of Children at each National Association for Refugee Children, 1938-1940 Statistical Tables of Ages of Sponsored Children, and Related Documents], 11-4034, 6, *SHAC*.

to publicize and coordinate the adoption plan. The NARC sent photographs of warphans to each cooperating organization, which in turn found local adopters to sponsor the children and reported back to the NARC with the details of all new or discontinued adoptions on a quarterly basis.[137]

One such cooperating organization was the *Comité de Secours Aux réfugiés et blesses Chinois* in Paris, France. The *Comité de Secours* was founded by a group of some of the most prominent Chinese women in Europe, including Oei Hui-lan (the Chinese-Indonesian fashion icon and wife of Ambassador to France Wellington Koo), Liao Tsuifeng (wife of renowned author Lin Yutang), and Chen Suk-ying (wife of the President of the Legislative Yuan Sun Fo).[138] Much like the New Zealand Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children and the New York-based United Council for Civilian Relief in China, the *Comité de Secours* first implemented the adoption program upon the personal suggestion of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Oei Hui-lan wrote to Madame Chiang on June 8, 1938, "As regards your admirable suggestion about the adoption of orphans, I am striving to interest my friends in it and solicit their help. I am glad to be able to report to you that already three persons whom I approached have already indicated their willingness to adopt two orphans by paying for their upkeep."[139] Utilizing the prestige and personal networks of its founders, the *Comité de Secours* quickly built the adoption plan into its primary fundraising method. Liao Tsuifeng reported in October 1938, "We were

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[137] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui wei renyang ertong deng shixiang zhi guowai de xuanchuan ziliao ji baogao 戰時兒童保育會為認養兒童等事項致國外的宣傳資料及報告 [National Association for Refugee Children Publicity Materials and Reports Sent Abroad for the adoption of children and other matters], 11-4228, 103-104, *SHAC*.

[138] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui wei renyang ertong deng shixiang zhi guowai de xuanchuan ziliao yu baogao 戰時兒童保育會為認養兒童等事項致國外的宣傳資料及報告 [National Association for Refugee Children Publicity Materials and Reports Sent Abroad for the Adoption of Children and Other Matters], 11-4229, 49-51, *SHAC*.

[139] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui banli boteli jiaohui shourong 100 ming nantong ji guowai juan kuan juan wu an 戰時兒童保育會辦理伯特利教會收容 100 名難童及國外捐款捐物案 [Files on the National Association for Refugee Children Handling of the Bethel Mission Taking In 100 Refugee Children and Foreign Contributions of Money and Goods], 11-4233, 147-148, *SHAC*.

very happy to receive the 55 photographs of war orphans sent to this Committee. Half of them were taken up immediately, and we have already sent you seventeen thousand francs (17,000fr.) on this account. We are, however, only beginning to push this work ahead by circularizing an appeal to all our known friends and expect a great response."[140] By November, the *Comité* was signing up new adopters faster than the NARC could send photos. Liao wrote again in November concerning a delayed shipment of 300 photographs: "We shall be very happy if we can have the orphans' photographs soon as there are many people waiting anxiously to see the pictures of their adopted children. Please ask the person who is in charge of this work to send the 300 photos to this Committee at once by Air-Mail."[141]

Chinese diasporic networks also facilitated the exchange of materials and information about the adoption program among individuals and coordinating organizations in far-flung locations across the world. For example, the president of the Chinese Women's Relief Organization of New York was Mrs. C.H. Wang, a friend and former classmate of Madame Chiang Kai-shek at Wellesley.[142] She received 360 children's photographs from the *Comité de Secours* in Paris, after which her organization began utilizing the adoption program for its own fundraising work.[143] Wang Sheng Chih of the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation in Singapore learned of the adoption program from publicity materials sent to him by his former

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[140] 11-4229, 54-55, *SHAC*.

[141] 11-4229, 56-57, *SHAC*. The NARC's administrative capacities were hampered during the fall of 1938 after its hurried relocation from Wuhan to Chongqing in October. After transferring children from all its Wuhan-area institutions to new locations in the interior, the NARC left Wuhan for Chongqing on October 23, 1938—just three days before the Japanese Army captured the city. It would remain in Chongqing until concluding its operations in 1946. See Zhang, 80-87.

[142] "Wellesley Receives a Commencement Gift From China's First Lady," *The Bee*, June 23, 1938, 8; Many Present at N.Y. Party for Dr. Kung: C.H. Wang, Manager of Bank of China, Is Cocktail Host," *The China Press*, July 24, 1937, 5.

[143] 11-4234, 119-125, *SHAC*.

high school classmate C.T. Tseng, who was then working for the Hong Kong office of the Central Bank of China. Wang published NARC's regulations for the adoption of warphans by foreign nationals in the Singapore-based *Malaya Tribune* and took it upon himself to remit funds donated through the adoption program to the NARC.[144] In Launceston, Tasmania, Ann Chung organized the city's only two Chinese families to create an organization called the Chinese Relief Fund to Aid Victims of Japanese Aggression, which managed to facilitate at least ten adoptions through the NARC.[145]

Not only were Chinese migrant networks crucial to coordinating the adoption program on a global scale, some overseas Chinese were also among those who contributed to the NARC through the adoption program. Across Southeast Asia, overseas Chinese associations that had long contributed to charitable and political causes in China enthusiastically sponsored children. In May 1938, the Malacca Overseas Chinese Refugee Relief Committee Women's Fundraising Group resolved that its members would sponsor children through the NARC according to their means and encourage their relatives and friends to do the same.[146] In July 1939, the Kampar Chinese Merchants Association Club donated 1,200 *yuan* to adopt 20 warphans through the NARC and similarly vowed to solicit contributions from the overseas Chinese community.[147]

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[144] 11-4234, 130-131, *SHAC*; Wang Sheng Chih, "Refugee Children in China," *Malaya Tribune*, October 14, 1939, 4.

[145] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui guanyu waiguo juan kuan renyang ertong deng xiang de wenshu 戰時兒童保育會關於外國捐款認養兒童等項的文書 [National Association for Refugee Children Documents Regarding Foreign Contributions, Sponsored Children, and Other Matters], 11-4235, 192-193, *SHAC*.

[146] "Maliujia funü mujuan tuan jinxing jiuji nantong jue xian jiang suo cun yikuan hui zuguo jiuji tuanyuan jinli renyang wai fu xiang quanmu 馬六甲婦女募捐團進行救濟難童決先將所存義款匯祖國救濟團圓盡力認養外復向外勸募 [Malacca Women's Fundraising Group Conducts Relief for Refugee Children, Resolves to Send Existing Funds for Relief in the Fatherland, Members Undertake Sponsorships to the Best of Their Means and Solicit Donations]," *Nanyang Shangbao* 南洋商報 [*Nanyang Siang Pau*], May 14, 1938, 16.

[147] "Jinbao huashang ge huiyou renyang zuguo nantong nian ming bing jiang xiang qiaojie quanmu yi hong jiuji 金寶華商各會友認養祖國難童廿名並將向僑界勸募以宏救濟) [Friends of the Kampar Chinese Merchants

However, perhaps the most enthusiastic of all overseas Chinese adopters was Kuo-ching ("K.C.") Li, the founder of the Wah Chang Trading Corporation in New York, who was dubbed "the richest Chinese in America."[148] In 1940 Li requested that the NARC identify 20 children "who appear to be endowed with unusual possibilities" whom he would pledge to support until they reached eighteen years of age. Complying with his request, the NARC selected "twenty worthy warphans" who had "been tested and found to be comparatively higher in I.Q." as the recipients of Li's aid.[149] In addition to the standard sponsorship costs, Li donated $1,600 annually to be held in trust on their behalf, "so that in the event things should turn out so that I cannot see them through some year, they would nevertheless be provided for."[150] In correspondence with the NARC over the years, Li exhibited considerable interest in the children, asking after their personal well being, offering input on their educational choices, and expressing delight upon receiving their letters.[151] Of course, few people had the resources or inclination to participate in the adoption plan on such a grand scale. Nevertheless, his case provides one extraordinary example of the overseas Chinese donors who sought to build personal ties with Chinese warphans through the NARC's adoption plan.

Overseas Chinese philanthropists also utilized their multicultural knowledge to package the adoption plan for a global audience by articulating its significance in the languages of humanitarianism and Christian love. For example, one report by the Hong Kong Branch of

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Association Adopt 20 Refugee Children in the Fatherland and Will Solicit Contributions Among the Overseas Chinese Community to Expand Relief Work]," *Nanyang Shangbao*, July 27, 1939, 32.

[148] "K.C. Li Dies at 68; Tungsten Expert: President of Wah Chang Smelting and Refining—'Richest Chinese' in U.S.," *New York Times*, March 8, 1961, 33.

[149] 11-4230, 32-38, *SHAC*.

[150] 11-4230, 24-26, *SHAC*.

[151] 11-4230, 39-43, *SHAC*.

NARC suggested that there was a universal moral imperative to aid suffering children common to both Confucianism and Christianity:

> Mencius has vividly described how any person, upon seeing an infant in danger of falling into a well, would instinctively become sympathetic and endeavor to do all he could to save it…
>
> Jesus also said: 'Suffer little children to come unto me, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.[152]

Upon learning that some New Zealanders were hesitant to contribute to the NARC because many of the children were not exposed to Christianity, Madame Chiang Kai-shek replied by expressing her belief that "often people who are not professed Christians, and there are many such in China who have never heard of the teachings of Christ, put into practice the desire and spirit to serve mankind which characterize Christ's teachings." She added, "I wonder whether it would do any good for you to point out to the small number of people who have refused to subscribe because not all of our children are receiving Christian training, the fact that the Good Samaritan never inquired what religion, if any, the wayfarer, who fell in the hands of the robbers, professed."[153] Another New Zealand fundraising appeal circulated by Madame Feng Wang implicitly addressed such concerns by declaring the universality of humanitarian sentiment: "Nationality, politics, creed, these make no barrier to such a call for sympathy and help."[154] By skillfully crafting appeals to adopt Chinese children in terms of humanitarianism and Christian love, the NARC attracted widespread interest in the adoption program. But convincing people to donate was only the first step. Facilitating the exchange of meaningful correspondence between foreign adults and Chinese children would prove perhaps an even greater challenge.

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[152] 11-4235, 64-70, *SHAC*.

[153] Letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek to F.W. Furkert, June 7, 1940, *ATL*.

[154] 11-4230, 112, *SHAC*.

Writing Global Intimacy

The ways in which children comprehended and carried out the unfamiliar task of writing letters to foreign strangers who addressed them in familial terms was shaped by recent transformations of Chinese epistolary culture. By the time the NARC implemented its adoption program in 1938, children's letters had already become a well-established genre of writing within educated Chinese families. As Danni Cai has shown, for the increasing number of children studying away from home in new-style schools during the early twentieth century, writing letters to family members and teachers was an important part of daily life. As a result, letter-writing manuals for students (*xuesheng chidu fanben* 學生尺牘範本) proliferated during this period, many of which achieved great commercial success and underwent dozens of printings.[155]

Republican era letter-writing manuals inculcated schoolchildren with the idea that letter writing was an important medium through which to demonstrate love and filial piety for parents and family members during times of physical separation. In terms of content, the model "letters home" (*jia shu* 家書) contained in these manuals typically consisted of straightforward academic progress updates. For example, a model letter to one's father in the *Practical Letter Manual for Students* reported, "The school's coursework is divided into numerous subjects. Moral cultivation, Chinese, gymnastics, and math are the four most important subjects. The teachers' explanations are very detailed, and I can comprehend all of them. If there is something I do not know, I can consult with my classmates."[156] The purpose of such letters, however, was not

[155] On letter-writing manuals for children in Republican China, see Danni Cai, *Minguo xuesheng shuxin jiaoyu yanjiu—yi xuesheng chidu ben wei zhongxin* 民國學生書信教育研究————以學生尺牘本為中心 [Research on Epistolary Education for Students in the Republican Period—Using Student Letter Writing Manuals as a Focal Point], Xiamen University MA Thesis, 2014.

[156] Quoted in Cai, 24.

simply to communicate information but also "to show familial love and concern for one's family members and relatives"—what was often described in letter manuals as "the sentiment of familial admiration" (*ru mu zhi qing* 孺慕之情).[157] Nevertheless, familial intimacy was not communicated through direct emotional expression. Rather, children demonstrated sincere sentiment through the time and effort required to learn and follow formal epistolary conventions.

In some regards, the letters that children wrote to their foreign foster parents through the NARC's adoption program resemble the model "letters home" contained in the letter-writing manuals for children popular at the time. Republican era letter-writing manuals often included both literary (*wen yan* 文言) and vernacular (*bai hua* 白話) versions of model letters, "the one to model the original form, the other to go along with societal trends."[158] The letters that children wrote through the adoption program, however, were exclusively in the vernacular form. Nonetheless, in both form and content they were often quite similar to the letters their peers in other educational institutions were taught to write to their parents. For example, the vernacular version of a model letter to one's parents in the *New Letter Writing Manual for Students* reads:

> The conditions at school are not very different from last year, only the name of our "national literature" (*guo wen* 國文) class has been changed to "national language" (*guo yu* 國語). I study very hard for national language. After my classwork is finished, I play all sorts of beneficial games, like soccer, boxing, and "hop the iron bar," all of which can help develop the body and invigorate the spirit. After I started practicing, my body has felt well, and I am eating more than before. These are all benefits of exercise.[159]

Compare that to the letter a girl named Chia-chin wrote to her foster mother Helen in New Zealand in May 1941:

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[157] Cai, 27.

[158] Huang Kezong 黃克宗, *Chudeng Xin Chidu* 等新尺牘 [New Elementary Letter-Writing Manual] (Shanghai: Guang Wen Shuju, 1921).

[159] *Xuesheng xin chidu* 學生新尺牘 [New Letter Writing Manual For Students] (Hong Kong: Chen Xiang Ji Shuju, undated), 13-14.

> Now I will tell you about the situation at the orphanage. Every day we have four classes, three classes in the morning and one in the afternoon. There are three meals per day. We eat rice for two meals and porridge for the other. Our lives are very good. On Sundays we can go out and play. Now the orphanage is also giving us cotton-padded clothes. I am currently in second grade. My grades are very good.[160]

Often written as life updates that focused on their academic curriculum and the material conditions of their daily lives, the letters that children sent their foster parents through the adoption program were in these respects not so different from the letters written by countless other Chinese students to their families back home.

Despite these similarities, the letters children wrote for the adoption program were sometimes characterized by an emotional exuberance that is decidedly absent from the model letters contained in instructional manuals. For example, a boy named Hew Wei wrote to his foster mother Bethea, "I was so happy when I received your picture and letter. I held your photograph in my two hands and stared at your happy face, and I could not stop myself from pressing it to my face over and over. Although we are separated by rivers and mountains, at that moment it was as if I had fallen into your embrace!"[161] A letter from a girl named Tao-chuan to her "Aunty Dolly" was equally emotive: "When I received your June 17th letter and learned that you have adopted me to be your niece, I was suddenly startled in my heart. I thought to myself,

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[160] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui guanyu waiguo renyang ertong juankuan lai han meiguo yuan hua jiuji hui wei ertong zhuan xue deng xiang wenshu 戰時兒童保育會關於外國認養兒童捐款來函美國援華救濟會為兒童轉學等項文書 [National Association for Refugee Children documents regarding foreign sponsorship of children, donations, and incoming letters; United China Relief helping children transfer schools; and other matters], 11-4237, 47-49, *SHAC*.

[161] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui guanyu waiguo you ji jingfei zuo shengdanjie fei shenqing meiguo hongshizi hui juanzeng wanju qing fa ertong fuzhuang fei deng xiang de wenshu 戰時兒童保育會關於外國郵寄經費作聖誕節費申請美國紅十字會捐贈玩具請發兒童服裝費等項的文書, [National Association for Refugee Children documents regarding letters, funds, and Christmas money sent from abroad; applications for toys donated by the American Red Cross; requests to send money for children's clothes, and related matters], 11-4239, 56-57, *SHAC*.

wow, there truly are kind and affectionate people like that in the world. From now on, I am once again a lucky child."[162]

How did the children in NARC warphanages learn to write in such a highly sentimental style? It is possible that the NARC explicitly instructed children to write with such unrestrained emotion to please their foreign sponsors, but I have not come across any instructions to this effect in the archives. The NARC's instructions regarding children's letters that are available in the archives are brief and matter-of-fact. For example, after receiving Bethea's letter to her adoptee Hew Wei, the NARC office translated it into Chinese and forwarded it to the superintendent of the Guizhou Branch No. 4 Warphanage where Hew Wei resided along with the following directions: "Instruct [Hew Wei] to write a letter expressing gratitude as well as reporting on his personal experiences and the conditions of his life in the orphanage. Send it back to this office (ensuring that it is written neatly) so that it can be translated and forwarded."[163] In internal communications, however, the NARC often stressed the importance of creating sentimental bonds between children and their sponsors through correspondence. In one instance, the NARC headquarters wrote to the Sichuan Branch No. 5 Warphanage requesting that a child named I-cha write a letter to his foster mother in order to "strengthen the emotional connection between the two sides (*lianluo shuangfang qinggan* 聯絡雙方情感)."[164] Perhaps most significantly, the highly cosmopolitan women who operated the NARC and its affiliated warphanages—many of whom had spent significant time abroad—would have been familiar

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[162] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui guanyu geleshan fenhui qing bo jingfei shourong ertong deng xiang de wenshu 戰時兒童保育會關於歌樂山分會請播經費收容兒童等項的文書 [Wartime Child Refugee Society Documents Regarding the *Geleshan* Branch Requesting Funds to Take in Children and other matters], 11-4232, 145-146, *SHAC*.

[163] 11-4239, 61, *SHAC*.

[164] 11-4237, 121, *SHAC*.

with Western notions of familial intimacy and the types of "loving" letters most likely to attract and hold sponsors' interest in their adopted Chinese children.

In letters to their Chinese adoptees, sponsors can also be seen groping for an appropriate language through which to express love and familial intimacy to children in a different cultural context about which they knew little. In some cases, foster parents explicitly acknowledged their uncertainty about what and how to write. One woman from Auckland, New Zealand began by admitting her ignorance of Chinese epistolary customs: "Please forgive me if I have not begun my letter to you in the way to which you are accustomed—the peoples of different countries do many things differently, but can be very good friends in spite of that!"[165] A woman named Joan from Paeroa, New Zealand frankly acknowledged that so much time had passed between letters that she was unsure what to write: "I was very pleased to receive your letter with its translation this week. It took a long while to reach N.Z. but I am sure we are very lucky to receive letters at present. It is such a long time ago since I first wrote to you that I am not quite sure what to write about."[166] How then did sponsors write letters to foster the sense of a meaningful adoptive relationship with children about whom they knew little, and who knew little about them?

While sponsors' letters vary in both tone and content, distinct patterns nevertheless emerge, suggesting a loosely coherent set of writing practices characteristic of global intimacy. One of the most common strategies that foster parents used to create a sense of familial intimacy with their adopted Chinese children was writing in extraordinary detail about their families and hometowns—as if offering a correspondence course in all the information a child in their family *would* know. While children's letters were typically one or two pages in length, sponsors' letters

[165] 11-4232, 112-119, *SHAC*.

[166] 11-4231, 58-69, *SHAC*.

often stretched on for five, six, or even seven handwritten pages. After confessing that she was "not quite sure what to write about," Joan went on to write at length about everything from the history of New Zealand ("Exactly 100 years ago N.Z. became part of the British Empire") to indigenous culinary tastes ("the Maoris eat humaras (sweet potato) and they are very fond of fish, especially the head of the fish") to native bird species ("The most famous of N.Z. birds is perhaps the Kiwi").[167] Other sponsors wrote at length about their children and relatives, explaining to their new adoptees precisely how they fit into their new foster families. A woman named Alice described her six children (five daughters and one adult son) in considerable detail before adding, "I am so glad that my adopted child is a boy—because I always wanted another boy."[168] Her description of their idyllic family life struck a chord with her foster son, who, after all, had been separated from his family amidst the horrors of war. He replied:

> After I read your letter, I felt so many interesting things, like having such an admirable brother and six dear little sisters living in one family, playing together every day with all those lively animals in the pasture. I wish I could grow wings and fly over to also enjoy such amazing good fortune.[169]

In another poignant example, a woman named Dorothy from Wanganui, New Zealand wrote to her adopted son Chen-chia, "I have no little boy or girl of my own, but have often wished I had, so I am getting the next best thing by adopting some."[170] For both sponsors and their adopted children, reading and writing about home and family helped make their adoptive relationship meaningful despite cultural, linguistic, and geographic barriers.

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[167] 11-4231, 58-69, *SHAC*.

[168] 11-4237, 33-43, *SHAC*.

[169] 11-4231, 118-121, *SHAC*.

[170] 11-4232, 166-171, *SHAC*.

Found in Translation

The NARC relied on the necessity of translation as means to smooth over discrepancies in the ways Chinese children and their foster parents expressed familial intimacy. By carefully comparing original letters with the translations prepared by the NARC staff in Chongqing, it is possible to reverse engineer the logic of the translational practices undergirding the adoption program. For the NARC, translation was not an impediment to intimate communication but rather a technology of translingual intimacy through which their cosmopolitan staff members provided not only linguistic but also cultural mediation for children and their sponsors.

To be sure, many small discrepancies between the original and translated versions of letters appear to be innocent translation mistakes on the part of NARC staff who were fluent but non-native English speakers. To take just one amusing example, Dorothy wrote to her adopted child, "I am not very fond of the camera myself but will get one of my nieces to take a photograph for you." The Chinese translation renders this sentence, "It's a pity that my camera is not very good, but I will ask one of my nieces to take a photograph for you."[171] Apart from such instances, most significant translation discrepancies appear to be deliberate attempts to remove or alter statements that would seem inappropriate or awkward outside of their original cultural and linguistic context. For instance, in his February 1941 letter Hsio-djen wrote, "In the morning we have four hours of classes, and in the afternoon we have four hours of sewing. I only regret that I am slow-witted by nature and that my progress in both my studies and work lags far behind." While such comments could be construed as appropriately humble in a Chinese context, in English they are at best awkward and at worst might cause his foster parents to wonder why their funds were being used on a child with so little natural aptitude. As a result, the

[171] 11-4232, 166-171, *SHAC*.

offending sentence is simply omitted from the corresponding section of the English-language translation: "We have classes all morning and we learn sewing in the afternoon. I hope you will pray for our progress."[172] The letters that foreign sponsors wrote to their Chinese adoptees were similarly massaged in translation. For instance, in her first letter to her adopted child, a woman named Leska from Sherman, Texas concluded with the line, "I like your picture very much—I keep it on my desk because I love you." In an American context, this statement can be read as warmly reassuring a war orphan that he is, in fact, loved. In Chinese, such a bold declaration of love (the word "love" is thickly underlined in the original letter) from a foreign stranger in her first communication would likely come across as uncomfortable and overbearing. Instead, the translator softened the sentiment by subtly altering it to read, "I like you and your picture, so I put your picture on top of my writing desk."[173] On one level, we might understand the necessity of translation as limiting the extent of intimacy possible through the adoption program. After all, children and their sponsors could not communicate with each other in their own words. On another level, however, the NARC's translational practices made the letters they exchanged both linguistically comprehensible *and* culturally legible. In their roles as translators, NARC staff performed necessary work for facilitating the adoption program across conflicting regimes of family and intimacy.

[172] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui wei shourong ertong yu guowai you ren de laiwang wenshu 戰時兒童保育會為收容兒童與國外友人的來往文書 [National Association for Refugee Children Intercourse with Foreign Friends Regarding Taking in Children], 11-4231, 118-121, *SHAC*.

[173] 11-4231, 95-101, *SHAC*.

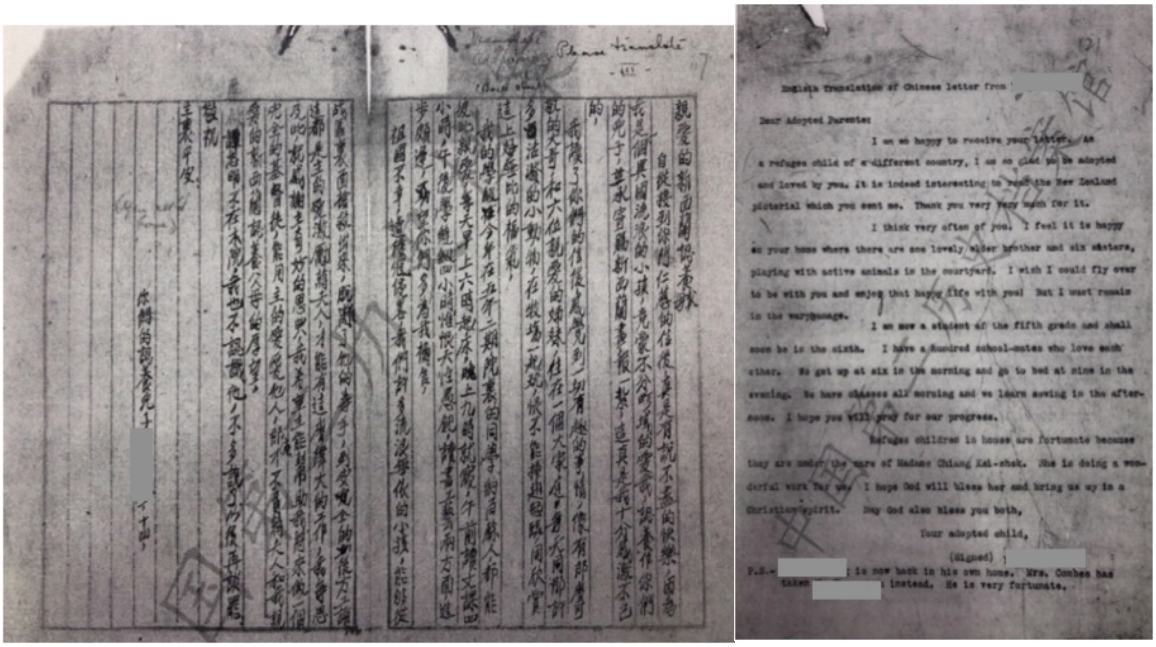

Figure 1.2. Transcription of Chinese-original and English-language translation of letter from Hsio-djen. The NARC utilized translation as a means to smooth out discrepancies in the ways Chinese children and foreign sponsors expressed familial sentiment. 11-4231, 118, 121, *SHAC*.

"A Shock Much Too Great for Their Immature Minds to Comprehend"

In her classic 1983 book, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Arlie Hochschild coined the term "emotion work" to describe the effort required "to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others."[174] Put simply, emotion work describes the labor of managing one's own emotions out of deference to the feelings of others. As Kristine Alexander has argued, emotion work can be a helpful concept for studying the affective labor often demanded of children (girls in particular) to make adults feel happy by properly displaying emotions such as love and gratitude.[175] Emotion work is likewise a useful analytical tool for understanding the emotional

[174] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 25.

[175] Kristine Alexander, "Agency and Emotion Work," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2015), 120-128.

labor children performed to secure their livelihoods through the adoption program. Especially considering the trauma so many of them had experienced, children's letters to their sponsors were remarkably upbeat, and they were almost universally positive in their descriptions of life in the warphanages. A letter from a boy named Ya-lo at the Guizhou Branch No. 3 Warphanage near Zunyi is prototypical:

> Our warphanage is in Taoxi Temple Village a few *li* outside the city. The scenery is very beautiful, and there is not a danger of air raids. In the orphanage we study for half the day and learn a craft for half the day. In third grade I study the *War of Resistance Reader,* and I am learning handicrafts. We also have medical facilities. I think for refugees to get such comforts, it is truly a paradise outside this world![176]

As the NARC understood well, children's letters were also fundraising appeals with the purpose of attracting and sustaining sponsor interest. By painting the warphanages as idyllic spaces where children could learn and grow happily in safety and comfort, such letters inspired confidence that donors' funds were put to good use.

Nevertheless, other types of evidence reveal that children in NARC warphanages were plagued by severe psychological problems and often harbored deep grievances against the institutions in which they lived. In 1943 the Central Hygiene Laboratory Mental Health Office (*zhongyang weisheng shiyan yuan xinli weisheng shi* 中央衛生實驗院心理衛生室) conducted an examination of the psychological well-being of children in NARC warphanages. As part of their examination, they administered a questionnaire to 99 warphans adapted from the famous Woodworth Personal Data Sheet developed by Columbia University psychologist Robert Woodworth in 1917 to test whether military recruits might be prone to nervous breakdowns during enemy bombardments.[177] The version of the survey developed by the Mental Health

[176] 11-4237, 159-161, *SHAC*.

[177] Robert E. Gibby and Michael J. Zickar, "A History of the Early Days of Personality Testing in American Industry: An Obsession With Adjustment," *History of Psychology*, Vol. 11, No.3 (2008), 164-167.

Office included 56 yes-or-no questions, each of which had a "normal" (*chang tai* 常態) as well as an "abnormal" (*bian tai* 變態) response. Questions ranged from "Do you make friends easily?" (Normal answer: yes) to "In addition to the world you see, is there another world within your innermost being?" (Normal answer: no). The more questions answered normally, the higher a child's "emotional stability" (*qingxu wending xing* 情緒穩定性) was rated.[178] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the study found that children at NARC warphanages were far less emotionally stable than their peers at other educational institutions.[179]

The psychological examinations of warphanage children also included unstructured one-on-one interviews in which they were asked to narrate their experiences to investigators. While the letters that children sent to their foster parents almost universally described their happy lives at the warphanages, the psychological exam records tell a very different story. For example, children's letters often remarked about how well they got along with their peers. Tao-chuan wrote, "Our class has several dozen students who all closely look after each other."[180] In contrast, their psychological interviews were rife with complaints of bitter interpersonal conflicts. The story of an eleven-year-old girl named Le-hua who was blind in her left eye was recorded by her interviewers as follows:

> When she entered the warphanage, some of the older female students would often humiliate her. The dorm leader and the student in charge of cleaning would often abuse their authority. Whenever they saw her enter the dormitory, they would force her to

[178] Su Hua 蘇華, "Kangzhan Shiqi Nantong de Yichang Xinli Wenti 抗戰時期難童的異常心理問題 [Abnormal Psychological Problems of Refugee Children During the War of Resistance]," *Minguo Dang'an* 民國檔案 [Republican Archives], No. 3 (1995), 121-129.

[179] For example, at the Nankai Middle School boys recorded an average score of 39 and girls an average score of 38. In contrast, at the No. 1 Warphanage in Chongqing both boys and girls averaged scores of only 30. "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui guanyu wei ertong xinli ceyan de wenshu 戰時兒童保育會關於為兒童心理測驗的文書[National Child Refugee Association Documents Regarding Psychological Testing of Children]," 11-3318, 55-63, *SHAC*.

[180] 11-4232, 145-146, *SHAC*.

> kneel on a bamboo rod and squeeze her head into the chamber pot to smell the foul odor.[181]

The disturbing findings of the Central Hygiene Laboratory Mental Health Office investigation into the emotional health of children at NARC warphanages provide sobering context to the sunnily optimistic letters they wrote to their foster parents abroad. After all, as Madame Chiang acknowledged in a letter to the Victorian Chinese Women's Relief Committee in Melbourne, Australia, "Some of the children need years of care as the effect of seeing their parents, relatives, and homes destroyed and desolated has been a shock much too great for their immature minds to comprehend."[182] Nevertheless, to ensure the emotional satisfaction of the sponsors upon whose donations they depended, the children selected for the adoption program had to do the emotional labor of performing gratitude and optimism while suppressing any grievances or self-doubts.

The Intimacy of Objects

While the adoption program sought to build sentimental ties between Chinese warphans and their foreign adopters, its success depended upon the transnational exchange of physical objects—letters, photographs, and gifts—in a time of global war. In the absence of any physical contact between sponsors and their adoptees, these objects could take on immense significance as the only physical traces of a correspondent across the ocean. The adoptive relationship was officially initiated when sponsors received a photograph of their adoptee, and for many sponsors simply possessing a child's photograph was enough to foster a sense of personal connection. After receiving the photograph of her adoptee Dung Ngao, a woman named Lillias wrote to the NARC, "I like the look of him very much indeed and very likely if I saw all your little boys and

[181] 11-3318, 55-63, *SHAC*.

[182] 11-4234, 89-90, *SHAC*.

girls he would be the one I would choose to have for my little boy."[183] Sponsors often treasured such photographs and displayed them prominently within their homes and communities. A woman named Maria from Tauranga, New Zealand wrote to her foster son Ren, "Your photograph looks so nice in a little round silver frame, on my bedroom changing piece."[184] Others exhibited their photographs in more public ways. A woman named Esther wrote, "We, in Nihotupu, are so glad to have your photograph—we are going to put it in a frame and keep it in our church and every day we will be asking the dear Lord Jesus to have you safe in his keeping."[185] She even sent her adopted son a picture of the small, wooden church where she kept his photograph.[186]

In addition to their photographs, the letters that sponsors received from their adoptees were significant not only for their written contents but also as physical objects produced by the children themselves. When children wrote letters to their foster parents, the NARC would send sponsors both the handwritten Chinese original as well as a typewritten translation. Although most sponsors could not read the original letters, they attached profound significance to them as material testaments to their relationships with their Chinese adoptees. Bethea from North Otago wrote to her foster child Hew Wei, "You have made me so happy and satisfied, having your photo, and now a letter written by your own hand. I am feeling rich indeed."[187] Upon receiving

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[183] Zhan shi ertong bayou hui guanyu waiguo juan kuan juan wu renyang ertong bao Sichuan ge yu ertong jinkuang deng xiang de wenshu 戰時兒童保育會關於外國捐款捐物認養兒童函報四川各育兒童近況等項的文書 [National Association for Refugee Children Documents Regarding foreign donations of money and goods, children's sponsorship letters, reports on the current situation of children cared for in Sichuan, and other matters], 11-4236, 97-100, *SHAC*.

[184] 11-4238, 81-89, *SHAC*.

[185] 11-4232, 112-119, *SHAC*.

[186] 11-4234, 11-12, *SHAC*.

[187] 11-4239, 42-47, *SHAC*.

another letter from Hew Wei a year later, she was so moved that she physically embraced the letter as a totem of the child she would never hold in person: "I am ever so glad to get your dear loving letter. I just held it close to me in sheer delight." Bethea kept Hew Wei's photograph with her when she knelt for her twice-daily prayers, and the physical presence of his photograph enabled her to sense his spiritual presence. She wrote, "Every morning and night when I kneel down to pray you are there and oh so near."[188]

Some foster parents went beyond the exchange of photographs and letters that was standard in the adoption program by sending handmade gifts to their adopted children. In a letter to her foster son Chen-shih, Gladys described her four-year-old daughter Sally's penchant for arts and crafts: "We gave her a small pair of blunt-end scissors and she cuts out amazingly well for a small child. Here is a tiny shoe she has cut out!" She included both the paper cutout shoe as well as a photograph of Sally with the letter.[189] In his response, Chen-shih wrote, "Now I am sending a photograph of when the children in our warphanage put on a play to give to the little sister who can cut out shoes."[190] Other foster parents made clothes for their adopted children. Dorothy initially sponsored two children, one boy and one girl, and she sent them each different items of clothing. To the boy Chia-cheng she wrote, "I am sending you some clothes which I hope you will like. The boys in N.Z. wear suits like that in the summer time."[191] Several weeks later, she wrote to the girl Tao-chuan to tell her that she was making her a dress and asked, "Would you let me know whether the dress fits + whether it is the right length?"[192] Tao-chuan

[188] 11-4229, 88-89, *SHAC*.

[189] 11-4238, 46-59, *SHAC*.

[190] 11-4232, 163-164, *SHAC*.

[191] 11-4232, 166-171, *SHAC*.

[192] 11-4232, 152-156, *SHAC*.

replied, "I feel so grateful that Auntie made clothes for me. It made me feel an indescribable joy. Although I have not received it yet, I am sure that it will suit me."[193] On one hand, Tao-chuan's letter poignantly expressed her gratitude for her sponsor's personal efforts on her behalf. On the other hand, the fact that Tao-chuan had not yet received the dress suggests how the difficulties of wartime international transport constrained the possibilities for material exchange through the adoption program.

In fact, some of the gifts that sponsors sent their adoptees never arrived at all. The prolonged saga that ensued when Bethea attempted to send Hew Wei a scrapbook provides an illustrative example. On May 24, 1940, Bethea sent the NARC a scrapbook with instructions to forward it to Hew Wei.[194] On July 1, 1940, she wrote to Hew Wei himself to inform him that she had sent a parcel so that he might look out for it.[195] She received no reply until May 8, 1941, when the NARC wrote to Bethea to tell her that the package "never arrived and so we presume it has met with misfortune enroute—perhaps by bombing either in your country or ours."[196] By this time, however, the package had already been returned to Bethea in New Zealand, "the reason given being the closing of the Burma Road." Finally, on May 21, 1941, almost one year after she first mailed the scrapbook, Bethea posted it once again, writing to Hew Wei: "I sincerely hope it reaches you this time…I'll be thinking of you, and trying to imagine I see you getting the parcel. It is filled with the love I send to you, and all the good wishes."[197] Here the archival records of Bethea and Hew Wei's relationship trail off. It is unclear whether he ever received the

[193] 11-4232, 145-146, *SHAC*.

[194] 11-4239, 53-54, *SHAC*.

[195] 11-4239, 42-47, *SHAC*.

[196] 11-4239, 58, *SHAC*.

[197] 11-4229, 81-85, *SHAC*.

scrapbook. To avoid such costly and demoralizing affairs, the NARC began discouraging sponsors from sending packages, asking them instead to send extra money that could be used to buy gifts for children locally. As the NARC put it bluntly to one sponsor, "Packages, however, are very difficult to get through these days of war. Money, therefore, would be much better."[198]

A Wrinkle in Time

In attempting to build adoptive relationships that relied on international postal service, foreign foster parents and their Chinese adoptees confronted a problem of temporality inherent to all epistolary relationships but exacerbated by the difficulties of interlingual communication and the conditions of global war: namely, how to accommodate the months-long gaps between when a letter was written, translated, and read. In navigating these long periods of silence and waiting, sponsors developed subtle—perhaps even subconscious—practices of writing through which they sought to make a distant child into an adopted son or daughter. One noteworthy example is a particular usage of the word "now" that appears across numerous letters. For example, in her first letter to her adopted child, Alice from Matamata opens with the dramatic lines, "You are our adopted Chinese son, and I am your New Zealand mother. *Now* we are introduced to each other are we not." And after concluding a detailed description of her children, she added, "*Now* isn't it fun being one of such a lovely big family."[199] In these letters, the word "now" means both "now that I have written this" *and* "now that you have read it"—fusing those distant moments into a shared temporality in which strangers could become kin. But while it was one thing to

[198] 11-4236, 102, *SHAC*.

[199] 11-4237, 33-43, *SHAC*. Emphasis added.

rhetorically erase the months that inevitably passed between when letters were written and when they were read, in the real world of wartime China a lot could happen in a few months.

The rapidly shifting lines of Japanese occupation and the omnipresent threat of air raids in the interior made keeping track of children who were part of a highly mobile refugee population spread out across dozens of warphanages a difficult and sometimes impossible task. The persistent logistical problems of coordinating the adoption program on the ground in wartime China can be gleaned through the intertwined efforts of Gladys and Alice—two women from New Zealand whose letters have been quoted above—to adopt children at an NARC warphanage. Gladys and Alice were friends and neighbors living on the dairy farms surrounding the town of Matamata on North Island, New Zealand. In 1939, they decided that they would each adopt a child through the New Zealand Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children. They hoped to adopt boys who lived at the same orphanage so that their adopted children would become friends who could talk about New Zealand together while swapping the illustrated magazines they sent them. Gladys first wrote to her adopted child Chi Ming on December 1, 1939. Her letter mentioned the friendship she hoped he would form with Alice's adopted son Kwang Foo:

> We have just sent you an illustrated paper and hope it will get through to you safely. It will give you some idea of New Zealand. A friend of ours, living near us, Alice, has sent another lad of thirteen—Kwang Foo, another illustrated paper and has just written to him. Is he in your camp? It would be interesting if you knew him and talked about New Zealand together.[200]

On the same day, Alice wrote to Kwang Foo, likewise mentioning that she hoped he would become friends with Chi Ming:

[200] 11-4238, 46-59, *SHAC*.

> A friend of ours in Matamata also has adopted a boy of your age. His name is Chi Ming. Perhaps you will know him and be able to share books, for he is to receive one too, but not the same as yours. His adopted mother is Gladys.[201]

As it turns out, however, neither Chi Ming nor Kwang Foo ever received the letters intended for them. On April 13, 1940, the NARC sent the following letter to Gladys:

> Your lovely letter written to Chi-ming has been safely received (also illustrated paper) and translated into Chinese. However, Chi-ming, you will be glad to know, has already been able to be reunited with his family. We are always glad when members of a family succeed in finding each other and are able to live together. Consequently, we are holding your letter and if you and your husband are willing, we shall substitute for Chi-ming, little Chen-shih now thirteen years of age.[202]

On June 14, 1940, the NARC sent a similar letter to Alice, informing her that Kwang Foo had been "restored to his own parents" and asking if she would be willing to substitute fourteen-year-old Hsio-djen instead: "In one way this will be a disappointment for you for you have already come to love him very much. We can realize that from your good letter to him. But in a bigger way, we believe you will rejoice with him and with us in the reuniting of his own family."[203]

Only one of the two letters was true. NARC notes on Alice's original letter to Kwang Foo confirm that he was in fact "taken back" (*ling hui* 領回) by his family.[204] Chi Ming's case was not so simple. Gladys's letter had been received by the NARC headquarters in Chongqing, translated into Chinese, and forwarded to the Sichuan Branch No. 6 Warphanage where Chi Ming resided. However, on March 14, 1940, the warphanage superintendent wrote to NARC headquarters with the following reply: "As that child fled the orphanage on October 13, 1939, and we remain unaware of his whereabouts, we are unable to deliver the translated letter and

[201] 11-4237, 33-43, *SHAC*.

[202] 11-4236, 22-23, *SHAC*.

[203] 11-4231, 51-52, *SHAC*.

[204] 11-4237, 33-43, *SHAC*.

photograph to him. Therefore we are returning the original documents to your office along with this letter."[205] Rather than deliver the uncomfortable truth that Chi Ming had run away from the warphanage, the NARC instead chose to tell Gladys that he had been reunited with his family. If their goal in telling such a falsehood was to ensure they would not lose Gladys as a sponsor, the gambit worked. On June 30, 1940, she wrote back to the NARC: "My husband and I were so glad to get your letter of April 13th and are very happy to know that Chi-ming has found his family—that is indeed wonderful news…Yes, we shall be only too glad to "adopt" little Chen-shih in Chi-ming's place."[206]

The quick turnover rates at NARC warphanages, in combination with the unreliability of wartime communications, made it extraordinarily difficult to build and sustain transnational intimate relationships through the NARC's adoption program. NARC records document numerous similar cases in which sponsors were asked to accept a different child because their original adoptee had left the orphanage. Whenever a child left under tragic or embarrassing circumstances, the NARC simply invented a happy ending rather than risk losing the confidence (and annual contributions) of their overseas donors.[207] Nevertheless, the NARC persisted in its efforts to make the adoption program work for its sponsors. On May 27, 1941, almost eighteen months after they had first written to Chi Ming and Kwang Foo, the NARC forwarded both Gladys and Alice letters from their new adoptees, Chen-shih and Hsio-djen.[208] While the NARC appears to have always asked for sponsors' permission before substituting children, the practice

[205] 11-4234, 18-20, *SHAC*.

[206] 11-4232, 161-162, *SHAC*.

[207] For additional examples of adoptees leaving NARC warphanages, see 11-4234, 113-17, *SHAC* and 11-4238, 176-188, *SHAC*.

[208] 11-4232, 165; 11-4231, 20, *SHAC*

itself implied that Chinese children were interchangeable as objects of their foster parents' affection. A stark symbol of this interchangeability can be found on the copy of the Chinese translation of Alice's letter preserved in the Second Historical Archives in Nanjing. The name "Kwang Foo" has simply been crossed out at the beginning of the letter, and the name of her new adopted child, "Hsio-djen," squeezed into the margin beside it.[209]

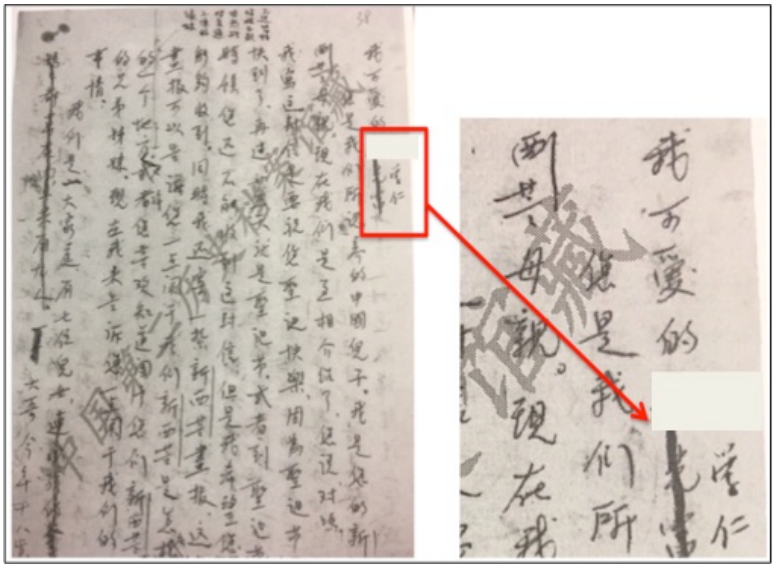

Figure 1.3. Chinese translation of letter from Alice of New Zealand. The name of its original intended recipient, "Kwang Foo," has been crossed out at the top right of the page, and the name of her new adopted child, "Hsio-djen," squeezed into the margin beside it. 11-4237, 39, *SHAC*.

"Every Cent Must be Spent on the Children Themselves"

Not only was sustaining personal relationships between the givers and receivers of humanitarian aid under conditions of global war logistically difficult—it was also expensive. Without question, the adoption program had been very successful in attracting global humanitarian interest in China's children. As the Chairman of the New Zealand Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children wrote in an August 15, 1938 letter to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, "The establishment of personal contact between the New Zealand person helping, and

[209] 11-4237, 33-43, *SHAC*.

the child helped, is in my opinion—which is shared by the members of the Executive—of very great importance to the success of our endeavors."[210] For the NARC, however, such enthusiasm for its adoption program proved a double-edged sword. As requests to adopt Chinese warphans poured in from New Zealand and elsewhere, the NARC's overhead expenses skyrocketed. Replying to Barnard on May 3, 1939, Madame Chiang sought to illustrate the enormous costs that would be involved if the adoption program were to be carried out on an even larger scale:

> [T]he money which would have to be spent on a staff to keep control of the registering, the photographing, and the answering of letters would use up a large sum of money which could be employed for the upkeep of many orphans. For instance, if only one letter from each of the 4,000 children was written and posted at ordinary mailing rates the postage cost would be Ch.$1,000.00. A lot of orphans can be kept for Ch.$1,000.00. Then would come the cost of overhead, and what is more frightening is the fact that when one year is up if 'adopters' did not continue, the whole of that registration would have to be scrapped.[211]

The necessity of translation was yet another labor-intensive task for the NARC's overworked staff: "You probably know that none of these little children can read or write English…So, you can understand the difficulties that would be entailed in an endeavor to translate letters from these little ones."[212]

In order to reign in the rapidly ballooning overhead costs of the adoption program, in 1940 the NARC began informing new donors that they could only provide photographs of "adopted" children and could no longer facilitate the exchange of letters. For example, on March 5, 1940, the NARC wrote to the Central Committee for Relief of the Civilian Population of China in Amsterdam: "We are very sorry but only the photo can be given; no exchange of letters. This is because of the enormous staff necessitated to carry such on, and the expense of

[210] 11-4235, 126-127, *SHAC*.

[211] 11-4235, 132; 11-4236, 53, *SHAC*.

[212] 11-4235, 132; 11-4236, 53, *SHAC*.

postage, etc. involved. Instead, every cent must be spent on the children themselves."[213] A month later the NARC wrote similarly to Wang Sheng-chih of the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation who was helping to coordinate the adoption program in Singapore:

> It has been found quite impossible with our many scattered warphanages and frequently disrupted communications due to the war, and without a special staff to attend to all the translations—to say nothing of postal costs—to carry on correspondence between adopters and children, and to send reports of school grades.[214]

The costs of carrying out the adoption program were beginning to outweigh its benefits, and the NARC hoped that people would continue to make annual contributions even without the opportunity to correspond with their "adoptees."

However, having previously dangled the promise of personal connection with an adopted Chinese child, the NARC found it difficult to continue to attract sponsors without facilitating at least some correspondence. W.E. Barnard replied to Madame Chiang's concerns proposing a compromise solution in which the New Zealand Council would not encourage correspondence with Chinese warphans, but if people took the initiative to write their adoptees, the NARC would ensure they received a response.[215] Perhaps reluctantly, the NARC agreed to make a "special exception" and ensure that sponsors in New Zealand who wrote their adopted children would continue to receive replies.[216] The persistence of correspondence between New Zealanders and Chinese warphans, dutifully translated by the NARC, shows that they generally honored this agreement. Just two days after the NARC had informed a group in Amsterdam that there could be no correspondence with adopted children, it wrote to a New Zealand woman to assure her that

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[213] 11-4234, 162-165, *SHAC*.

[214] 11-4234, 135, *SHAC*.

[215] 11-4236, 58, *SHAC*.

[216] 11-4236, 58, *SHAC*.

"the annual letter from the 'adopter' and the child will gladly be translated at Headquarters."[217] In fact, archival records show that the agreement reached between the NARC and the New Zealand Council was not such a "special" exception after all. Letters exchanged between Chinese warphans and sponsors in the United States can also be found from well after the NARC announced it would no longer facilitate correspondence as part of its adoption program. The NARC's inability to sustain international donations without providing for the exchange of letters suggests the power of forging personal connections between the givers and receivers of humanitarian aid as a fundraising tool. However, Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the NARC also had additional reasons for continuing to facilitate correspondence between Chinese children and their foreign foster parents in places like New Zealand and the United States.

Intimate Diplomacy

During the nearly four-and-a-half years that elapsed between the outbreak of full-scale war between China and Japan in July 1937 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, China fought the powerful Japanese military virtually alone. In this context, attracting international support for the war effort was the Nationalist government's most pressing foreign policy objective. While Japanese atrocities received significant coverage in the international press, the adoption program made the Japanese occupation personal for foreign sponsors who received letters from their own "adopted" children describing how they had suffered at the hands of the Japanese. It offered an opportunity to circulate intimate narratives of Japanese cruelty to private citizens across the world—who, the NARC hoped, might in turn pressure their governments to provide greater aid to China in its struggle against Japan.

[217] 11-4236, 102, *SHAC*.

Virtually all of the children in the NARC's adoption program had been rendered homeless by war, and their letters often narrated their personal experiences of violence and dislocation for their foreign sponsors. On May 27, 1941, a girl named Han at the Sichuan Branch No. 7 Warphanage wrote to her foster mother Karen in New Zealand:

> Ah! I think about my home, which is still being trampled by the enemy in a city in the occupied area. The scent of the fields and gardens in my lovely hometown has now been replaced by the stench of the smoke and fire of war, suffocating the innocent people. I think even more about my dear mother and my younger brothers and sisters, who must bow their heads and endure the life of a slave, living amongst those who don't treat people as people. Every day they see the ferocious faces and vicious eyes of those animals and hear their murderous screams. Their lives have no freedom. How painful! Such unreasonable oppression…I hate the Japanese bandits.[218]

Other letters contributed to the international prestige of Madame Chiang and the Nationalist Party by emphasizing her personal role in rescuing children from the Japanese invaders. A boy named Cheng Zur wrote to his foster mother Katherine:

> Because the enemy occupied our native home, I had to leave my family. But friend, my luck is not so bad! Do you know that in China we have a great mother, Madame Chiang? She established many warphanages to take in child refugees. I was sent to the No. 2 Warphanage where I have the opportunity to attend school.[219]

And in fact many sponsors appear to have been inspired to contribute to the adoption program by the heroic image of Madame Chiang Kai-shek as the great "mother" of all China's warphans. A woman named Kate from Wellington, New Zealand wrote to her adopted son that she was adopting him through "that wonderful scheme where you are now cared for through the kindness + generosity of those great + noble people the Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek + Madame."[220] Children's letters offered a unique opportunity for the NARC to simultaneously expose Japanese

[218] 11-4239, 97-100, *SHAC*.

[219] 11-4237, 117-119, *SHAC*.

[220] 11-4231, 37-44, *SHAC*.

atrocities and bolster the reputation of Madame and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek before a wide international audience.

While many children's letters employed a simple narrative structure of tragedy at the hands of the Japanese and redemption through the NARC, others adopted a more explicitly political tone in denouncing Japanese brutality. For example, in December 1939, the children of Class A at the Kemper Hall Boarding School for Girls in Kenosha, Wisconsin raised funds to adopt seven children through the NARC's adoption program.[221] The letters they received from their sponsored children—most of whom were about 12 years old and in the more advanced grades at NARC warphanages—are striking for the highly polemical tone with which they describe China's War of Resistance against Japan.[222] A sixth-grade boy named Chung-ya wrote:

> Rather than suffer oppression under the iron hoof of the Japanese bandits, we children would rather roam about the interior, enduring untold hardships. Fortunately, through the great benevolence of Madame Chiang Kai-shek, we were rescued from our hopeless plight and brought to the interior where we live a fine life and receive a good education. It can truly be said that we have been resurrected from death and given new life.[223]

Fifth-grader Chiu-fang concluded his letter as follows, "The only way we can repay your kindness is to study hard so that in the future we can overthrow Japanese imperialism!"[224] Such letters reframed the adoption program not simply as humanitarian aid to needy children but as a political statement in support of China in its War of Resistance Against Japan.

While letters that children sent through the adoption program often only reached their individual sponsors, the NARC also utilized other types of publicity materials to cultivate

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[221] 11-4239, 115-120, *SHAC*.

[222] 11-4239, 112-114, *SHAC*.

[223] 11-4239, 129-130, *SHAC*.

[224] 11-4239, 122-124, *SHAC*.

political support for China's war effort on a broader scale. For example, the NARC asked one warphan to write a message to the "children of America" for a United China Relief radio program to be aired in New York on June 6, 1941. Much like the individual letters children sent to their foster parents, this message to the children of America combined harrowing accounts of child suffering with gratefulness for the work of Madame Chiang and the NARC:

> We are a group of more than 20,000 children from all of the occupied parts of China raining down with artillery fire…Although we have met with the cruel tragedies of broken homes, dead family members, and wandering about as refugees, now we have made it to the interior, where we rely on Father Chiang (Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek), Mother Chiang (Madame Chiang Song Meiling), the NARC leaders, and all the warphanage superintendents and teachers, to take us in and provide us with a good education. Because of this, we are still able to grow up healthy and strong beneath the bombings of enemy planes. This is so lucky![225]

In the letters she wrote to promote the adoption program among prominent individuals and charitable organizations abroad, Madame Chiang also took the opportunity to recount examples of Japanese barbarism that she felt received insufficient international attention. In a December 1938 letter to Madame C.T. Loo of the *Comité de Secours* in Paris, Madame Chiang noted, "Everywhere we have been Japanese bombers have been active destroying villages, towns, and cities. The utter ruthlessness is indescribable. They report all the time their aerial ravages, but the press of the world seems to have become blasé, or, for some reason, do not now publish what is going on."[226] In letters to the New Zealand Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children, Madame Chiang wrote as if providing them with talking points to criticize neutrality in the Sino-Japanese War:

> We are fighting not only for our own salvation but also for all those principles which the democratic governments espouse. Sad it is to say, however, that the democratic

[225] 11-4232, 125-126, 149-151, *SHAC*.

[226] 11-4229, 60-65, *SHAC*.

> governments show no disposition to help China materially, not even to uphold the principles of the League of Nations which the democracies profess to maintain.[227]

These materials were often effective in convincing both powerful politicians and ordinary citizens of the need to provide greater assistance to China. W.E. Barnard, the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, responded to one of Madame Chiang's letters to admit:

> In reference to the latter parts of your letter, I wish to say (unofficially) that I appreciate the painful truth of your observations. China is indeed fighting a battle not merely for her own preservation but for the democracies of the world. I sincerely trust that your nation will not be left to struggle on without the aid which you so badly need and to which you are justly entitled. One generous New Zealand contributor wrote, somewhat crudely but with truth, that 'China is saving our skins.'[228]

In a letter to the NARC enclosing money for the adoption of one warphan, the organizing secretary of the Texas State Committee of the Church Committee for China Relief, wrote, "I hope and pray I may be of more and more help to you and China. We feel very proud and hopeful of dear China. We must win grandly. We shall."[229]

By fostering intimate relationships between the Chinese children who received aid and the foreign sponsors who provided it, the NARC's adoption program transformed the political possibilities of humanitarian aid. The letters that children wrote to their foreign foster parents offered intimate narratives of Japanese brutality, Chinese heroism, and international apathy. For the NARC and the Nationalist Party, the adoption program was not only a means of securing humanitarian aid but also a new form of intimate diplomacy through which it could build international support for its war effort. The Nationalist-affiliated NARC was among the first

[227] 11-4236, 52; 11-4235, 123-124, *SHAC*.

[228] 11-4235, 126-127, *SHAC*.

[229] 11-4234, 78, *SHAC*.

organizations to fully appreciate how the adoption program enabled the recipients of humanitarian aid to shape its political uses. They would not be the last.

Conclusion

Through the NARC's program for the "adoption of warphans by foreign nationals," thousands of people across much of the world "adopted" Chinese children with whom they built personal relationships through the exchange of photographs, gifts, and translated letters. Through widespread publicity campaigns initiated by overseas Chinese diplomats and philanthropists, the NARC's adoption program enabled sponsors to envision transnational adoptive families consisting of white, middle-class parents and orphaned Asian children. Nearly two decades before systematic legal international adoption began in Korea, the NARC's adoption program had already popularized the idea of adopting Asian children as a form of humanitarian rescue. Anticipating these developments, donors sometimes wrote to the NARC hoping to legally adopt the children they sponsored into their homes. In 1938, a woman named Sophie in London, who was already sponsoring twelve children though the NARC, offered to adopt four children ("two boys and two girls, under the age of five") whom she promised to support and educate at her own expense if their transport to England could be arranged.[230] Such offers were common enough that the NARC felt compelled to specify in its regulations for the adoption program: "The Adopters are to be thanked for their financial support only. Adoptees cannot be taken away from the Society and shall remain in the charge of the Society."[231]

[230] 11-4228, 31-32, *SHAC*.

[231] Wang Sheng Chih, "Refugee Children in China," *Malaya Tribune*, October 14, 1939, 4.

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of the Pacific War on December 7, 1941 only exacerbated the logistical difficulties and high overhead costs of the adoption program, finally rendering it impossible to sustain. In an April 1943 letter to a donor in California, the NARC explained the multitude of factors forcing it to discontinue its adoption program in 1942:

> Films for picture taking are now unobtainable, war prices for the support of the warphans so high, and office staff already so overworked that our 'adoption' system has since last year been forced to cease. We would like to have continued—but for the sake of the children decided that every cent must instead go to the feeding of them. When we started our warphan work, US$20 was sufficient to support a child for a year; now over US$200 is necessary!—to say nothing of other difficulties. Hence I must reply that we could not do as before; we could not send photos or assign individual children…[232]

Yet while NARC's adoption program was forced to close prematurely, the intimate turn in global humanitarian practice that it set into motion was just beginning. Coincidentally, at around the same time that the NARC decided to *stop* its adoption program, an American organization named China's Children Fund decided to *start* fundraising for its orphanages in China via its own version of the adoption scheme. China's Children Fund would dramatically expand the use of the adoption model of international child sponsorship—first in China and eventually across Asia. In doing so, it would transform the practices of global intimacy that first took shape in WWII China into central features of the post-WWII global humanitarian order.

[232] 11-4239, 184, *SHAC*.

CHAPTER II

"The Finest Article in the World": Christianity, Commodification, and the China's Children Fund

The Reverend Dr. J. Calvitt Clarke had a secret. By day, Clarke was the founder and executive chairman of the China's Children's Fund (*meihua ertong fulihui* 美華兒童福利會; "CCF"). Founded in Richmond, Virginia, in 1938 to provide emergency relief to Chinese children displaced by the Sino-Japanese War, the CCF quickly became one of the most significant humanitarian organizations working in China. The CCF fundraised for orphanage-schools throughout China via its own version of the "adoption plan" for international child sponsorship. By 1949, the CCF's adoption plan supported approximately 5,113 children in 42 institutions across China.[233] During the 1950s, the CCF expanded the adoption plan across East Asia and much of the world, and by 1961 it supported 36,000 children in 50 different countries.[234] Now called ChildFund International, the organization Clarke founded remains one of the largest child sponsorship agencies in the world today—making Clarke, in the judgment of one biographer, "one of the twentieth century's foremost and beloved figures in philanthropy."[235] But unbeknownst to all but a few of his closest confidantes, Clarke also moonlighted as a prolific author of racy romance novels under the secret penname Richard Grant. His many books included titles such as *Office Wife* ("Her boss believed in taking liberties!"), *Man Bait* ("She bartered love for vengeance!"), and *Eurasian Girl* ("Her blood ran hot with mingled fires!").[236]

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[233] Tise, 24.

[234] Janss, 9.

[235] J. Calvitt Clarke III, *Fifty Years of Begging: Dr. J. Calvitt Clarke and Christian Children's Fund* (Bloomington: Archway Publishing, 2018), xix.

[236] On Clarke's fiction see J. Calvitt Clarke III, "The Literary Life of Dr. J. Calvitt Clarke," *Paperback Parade: The Magazine for Paperback Readers & Collectors* (March 2014), 20-49; *Fifty Years of Begging*, 86-166.

While Clarke's novels were primarily intended to sell copies by titillating readers, they also provide insight into the particular mixture of humanitarianism, Christianity, and Orientalism animating his career in transnational philanthropy.

From the perspective of his work with CCF, the most interesting of Clarke's novels was his 1935 book *Eurasian Girl*. The titular character, Selene Ramsey ("She combined the exotic lure of an oriental geisha girl with the lovely, long-limbed appeal of an American debutante!"), had been raised in Singapore by white American parents before her family moved back to their home on Long Island. When Selene is made to believe that she is the illegitimate daughter of a Chinese prostitute, she becomes deeply depressed and loses her self-respect. While Selene had always rebuffed her many male suitors to save herself for marriage, upon learning that she is "Eurasian," she comes to believe that submitting to the sexual advances of unserious men is the closest thing to love to which she has a right. "I am only a Eurasian girl," Selene thinks to herself. "I'll take the crumbs that are left for me in love."[237] The novel's happy ending comes when Selene finds out that in fact she had been adopted by her uncle when her biological father (a white American) and his Chinese wife tragically passed away. Secure in the knowledge that her Chinese mother was a "most cultured" Christian woman, Selene eventually marries a white American man who had also grown up in Singapore as the child of missionaries.[238]

Eurasian Girl encapsulates a contradictory mixture of racial, sexual, and political ideologies. On its surface, the novel offers an anti-racist message that reaffirms the possibility of love across racial boundaries. "You listen to me," Selene's adoptive father says in the novel's climactic scene. "Yellow, red, white, black—or green, for that matter—these hues make no

[237] Richard Grant, *Eurasian Girl* (New York: Universal Publishing and Distributing Corporation, 1935), 59.

[238] Grant, 114.

difference. They are skin deep. The blood underneath is always red!" The novel even endorses a eugenic argument in favor of racial mixing: "Every scientist knows that the hybrid is the stronger breed."[239] Nevertheless, *Eurasian Girl* exhibits a profound uneasiness about the presence of sexualized Asian bodies in white American society. The entire plot depends upon the hypersexualization of Asian women, and Selene's very existence poses a threat to social order. As one male suitor tells her, "You could make any man unfaithful to his spouse I believe."[240] At the same time, the novel also expresses an American moral responsibility to Asia—and to Asian children in particular. It is the American couple that adopts Selene, an orphaned Chinese girl, and raises her as their own that serve as the novel's moral compass.

The tension in *Eurasian Girl* between the sexually tinged fear of Asian migration and American moral responsibility to Asia highlights a paradox of U.S.-East Asia relations at the dawn of WWII. When Clarke published *Eurasian Girl* in 1935, exclusion laws still prohibited the vast majority of Asian migration to the United States, and 15 U.S. states had anti-miscegenation laws prohibiting marriage between whites and Asians.[241] At the same time, many Americans continued to feel a moral responsibility to China rooted in the two nations' supposed

[239] Grant, 115. On discourses concerning interracial marriage in both the United States and China during the exclusion era, see Emma Teng, *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China, and Hong Kong, 1842-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). As Teng argues, in both the Chinese and American contexts the stigmatization of interracial families existed alongside a eugenic discourse that promoted white-Asian racial mixing as producing "hybrid vigor and racial improvement." Teng, 3.

[240] Grant, 106.

[241] These fifteen states were Missouri, South Dakota, Nebraska, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, California. See Hrishi Karthikeyan and Gabriel J. Chin, "Preserving Racial Identity: Population Patterns and the Application of Anti-Miscegenation Statutes to Asian Americans, 1910-1950," *Asian Law Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (June 2002), 1-40. Anti-miscegenation laws were declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Loving v. Virginia* (1967). On the history of anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, see Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

"special relationship."[242] Granted extraterritorial privileges and the right to proselytize throughout China by the unequal treaties signed in the aftermath of the Opium Wars, thousands of American missionaries had traveled to China to build orphanages, schools, and hospitals. Although almost always discussed separately by historians—exclusion falling under the purview of American history and extraterritoriality under the purview of Chinese history—exclusion and extraterritoriality worked as a single regime to structure the field of possible relationships between Chinese and Americans. Allowing American money, missionaries, and military personnel into China while excluding Chinese migrants from the United States, the regime of exclusion and extraterritoriality functioned as the legal architecture enabling Americans to "help" China while keeping actual Chinese people at bay.

The CCF's adoption plan—which enabled individual Americans to form intimate ties with Chinese children *without* bringing them to the United States—was a form of humanitarian rescue tailor-made for this particular moment in U.S.-China relations. Like Selene's parents in *Eurasian Girl*, ordinary Americans could rescue Chinese orphans through "adoption." But unlike in the novel, they could do so without provoking the racial and sexual anxieties raised by the prospect of Asian bodies on American soil.

This chapter uses the case study of China's Children Fund to examine how the practices of global intimacy developed in China during WWII became defining features of humanitarianism in East Asia during the postwar period. During the war, the NARC had pioneered the adoption plan as a popular but shortlived program for emergency child rescue work in China (Chapter One). In the postwar period, the CCF built the adoption plan into one of the largest and most culturally significant humanitarian programs across East Asia and much of

[242] For a survey of U.S.-China relations in the years leading up to WWII, see Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 115-147.

the world.[243] Moreover, as the CCF expanded to new locations such as Japan and Korea during the 1950s, it also played a crucial role in facilitating the first systematic programs for legal international adoption. By the end of the decade, the CCF ranked among the United States' largest private voluntary organizations by total revenue—and other "adoption plan" agencies were not far behind.[244]

Historians of the United States who have studied international adoption and child sponsorship in East Asia have conceptualized these programs as forms of "Cold War Orientalism" and "Christian Americanism."[245] While these terms are helpful for explaining American *interest* in international adoption and child sponsorship, they say less about how these programs were actually implemented on the ground in East Asia. In contrast, this chapter combines an analysis of how the CCF's Richmond headquarters attracted American donors with an investigation into how its offices in China, Japan, and Korea built the capacity to facilitate the adoption plan and international adoption on an unprecedented scale. I argue that the CCF built the adoption plan and international adoption into prominent humanitarian programs in post-WWII East Asia by engaging in the unabashed commodification of children. In the United States, the CCF created "demand" for the adoption plan by appealing to the intertwined

[243] On the CCF's activities in South China in the post-WWII period, see Zhu Aiqin [朱愛芹], *Meihua ertong fulihui zai huanan diqu de huodong yanjiu: 1945-1952* 美華兒童福利會在華南地區的活動研究：1945-1952 [Research on the Activities of China's Children Fund in the South China Region: 1945-1952], Sun-Yat-sen University, MA Thesis, 2005; Lei Jiachun [雷家春], *Minguo shiqi de Guangzhou jidujiao cishan huodong yanjiu (1912-1949)* 民國時期的廣州基督教慈善活動研究 (1912-1949) [Research on Christian Philanthropic Activities in Republican Era Guangzhou (1912-1949)], Guangzhou University, MA Thesis, 2019.

[244] As of 1960, the CCF ranked seventh with US $25.6 million in total annual revenue and Foster Parents Plan for War Children, another international child welfare organization that fundraised through the adoption plan, ranked eighth at US $25.4 million (calculated in 2005 U.S. dollars). McCleary, 27.

[245] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*; Arissa Oh, "A New Kind of Missionary Work: Christians, Christian Americanists, and the Adoption of Korean GI Babies, 1955-1961," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, Nos. 3 & 4 (2005): 161-188.

imperatives of universal Christian love, American moral responsibility to Asia, and the fulfillment of maternal desire. It marketed the adoption plan as an ideal way for ordinary Americans to participate in molding the next generation of a Christian, democratic, and American-allied East Asia—*without* the prospect of mass Asian migration to the United States. However, the CCF's fundraising success in turn required that its China office in Guangzhou generate the requisite "supply" of children through the mass production of high-quality photographs, detailed case files, and substantive letters. In order to facilitate personal relationships between Americans and Chinese children on such a large scale, the CCF needed to translate the adoption plan into standardized documents and routinized administrative procedures, a paradoxical phenomenon I call the "bureaucracy of global intimacy." This simultaneous personalization and standardization of humanitarian rescue continues to shape the practice of humanitarianism today.

"A Barbershop in Chambersburg": The CCF Origins Story

The CCF's accounts of its own early history emphasize two facets: the individual heroism of its North American male founders and its claim to have "invented" the concept of child sponsorship. According to institutional lore, J. Calvitt Clarke was inspired to create the CCF one afternoon in the summer of 1938 when he was chatting with an old friend and fellow aid worker named Stewart Nagle in a barbershop in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Their conversation turned to the suffering children in China, and Nagle offered Clarke the following challenge: "Why don't *you* do something about it?"[246] Clarke squared his jaw and replied, "All

[246] Versions of this story were often repeated in CCF's own internal histories. See for example, Edmund Janss, *Yankee Si! The Inspiring Story of Dr. J. Calvitt Clarke, His 36,000 Children and His Eloquent Answer to the Enemies of America Abroad* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1961), 27-28; John C. Caldwell, *Children of Calamity* (New York: The John Day Company, 1957), 32-33.

right, I will." And just like that, the CCF was incorporated in Richmond, Virginia on October 6, 1938, and Clarke was elected Executive Secretary.[247] Prominent in accounts of the CCF's early days in wartime China are the derring-do tales of Verent Mills, a Canadian missionary who became the CCF's Overseas Director in China, and Erwin Raetz, the CCF's General Superintendent of Orphanages in China. When Japanese advances threatened an orphanage in Taishan, Mills evacuated a group of 142 children, leading them on a months-long trek that covered hundreds of miles before delivering them safely to the CCF-funded Pu Kong Orphanage in Shaozhou, Guangdong.[248] Not to be outdone, when Raetz was travelling to China in early 1945 his ship was sunk by a submarine in the Indian Ocean, and he narrowly escaped by diving into one of the few remaining lifeboats just as it was being lowered down to sea.[249] These heroic tales, which have been repeated in CCF publicity materials for decades, were also emphasized in its Chinese-language promotional materials.[250]

The CCF's historical accounts also sometimes claim that Calvitt Clarke invented the adoption plan as a humanitarian fundraising strategy. ChildFund's website lists "the sponsorship model" as one its "innovations" and states that Clarke "started the 'child sponsorship' concept

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[247] "Minutes of First Meeting of Executive Committee of China's Children Fund, Incorporated," Dec. 9, 1938, Box IA1, Folder 1, *CCF*. On the institutional history of the CCF see Larry E. Tise, *A Book About Children: The World of Christian Children's Fund, 1938-1991* (Falls Church: Hartland Publishing, 1993) and Clarke III, *Fifty Years of Begging*.

[248] Janss, 35-37; Caldwell, 48-49.

[249] "A Miraculous Escape," *China News* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 1945), 1, 4.

[250] For example, "Shijie ertong fuli shiye xin luxiang─wei laoshi mushi zai li de husheng guangbo 世界兒童福利事業新路向─微勞士牧師在麗的呼聲廣播" [A New Direction for World Child Welfare Work—The Voice of Pastor Verent Mills Broadcast from Korea], *Tongsheng* 童聲 [Children's Voice], Vol. 1, No. 5 (May 1952), 3-4; "Qiaoguangyuan chuangbanren wei laoshi mushi 僑光院創辦人微勞士牧師" [The Founder of Kiu Kong Orphanage, Pastor Verent Mills," *Fu'er* 福兒 [Blessed Children], Vol. 1, No. 4 (Oct. 1946), 5.

we know today."[251] However, the first reference to the adoption plan in the CCF's archival records appears in April 1941, when the CCF agreed to send funds to the National Child Welfare Association of China to support 120 "adoptions."[252] At a meeting of the Executive Committee in July, Clarke argued for continuing to use the "adoption plan" for CCF fundraising, and by January 1942 the executive office had become "a clearing house for all of the mail going both ways."[253] Especially considering the strikingly similar language of their advertisements, it seems improbable that the CCF would have been unaware of the "adoption program" the NARC had been using to fundraise in the United States and elsewhere since 1938.

What is most significant about the CCF's origins story is not what it embellishes but what it omits. While the CCF's historical literature focuses on the high drama of the wartime period, it was not until after Japan's surrender in August 1945 that the CCF's adoption plan exploded in popularity. In the first year after the end of the war, the CCF's contributions to China more than doubled, from US $128,607 in 1944-1945 to US $372,217 in 1945-1946.[254] This is even more remarkable considering the precipitous drop in overall humanitarian giving the accompanied that

[251] https://www.childfund.org/about-us/history/. Accessed on July 19, 2019. The claim that the CCF invented the adoption plan has in turn been repeated in several scholarly accounts. To cite just two influential examples, Christina Klein's 2003 book *Cold War Orientalism* claims, "As a fundraising innovation, Clarke appealed to prospective American donors by representing their relationship with the children they sponsored as one of 'adoption.' The adoption campaign proved so successful that not only did other aid organizations begin using it, but it enabled the CCF to expand its operations throughout Asia in step with the Cold War." Sara Fieldston's 2015 book *Raising the World*, the most extensive historical treatment of child sponsorship to date, likewise states, "CCF…used a novel method of assisting children, matching foreign youngsters with foster parents in the United States who committed not only to a series of monthly donations but also to a regular exchange of letters with their foster children." Klein, 152; Fieldston, 43-44.

[252] Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of China's Children Fund, Incorporated, April 3, 1941, Box IA1, Folder 1, *CCF*.

[253] Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of China's Children Fund, Incorporated, July 31, 1941 and Jan. 29, 1942, Box IA1, Folder 1, *CCF*.

[254] Tise, 301.

end of WWII.[255] It was neither the creative genius of Clarke (the adoption plan had already been used in China for several years) nor the heroic exploits of Mills and Raetz (brave as they may have been) that explain the extraordinary popularity of CCF's adoption plan in the postwar period. Rather, it was through the much more mundane labor of redesigning publicity materials to appeal to American sponsors and building a transnational bureaucracy capable of processing massive quantities of paperwork that the CCF helped transform the adoption plan into one of the most prominent humanitarian programs in East Asia.

The CCF and Global Christianity

The rise of the adoption plan as one of the most prominent and successful forms of humanitarian fundraising in the post-WWII period emerged out of broader changes within the project of global Christianity. As Christian missionaries expanded their global reach during the early twentieth century, China emerged as one of their most significant destinations. At its peak during the 1920s, there were approximately 8,000 Protestant missionaries working in China, making it the largest Protestant missionary field in the world.[256] Although the number of missionaries in China dwindled over the ensuing decades, about 4,000 Protestant missionaries remained in China on the eve of the Chinese Communist Revolution in the late 1940s.[257]

The history of the global missionary movement during the first half of the twentieth century was marked by two dominant patterns: indigenization and secularization. In the aftermath of WWI, Western missionaries around the world entered a period of profound self-

[255] The total revenue of U.S.-based private voluntary organizations fell from US $2.8 billion to US $1.4 billion between 1945 and 1947 (measured in 2005 dollars). McCleary, 20.

[256]Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 94.

[257] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, "An Unlikely Peace: American Missionaries and the Chinese Communists, 1948-1950," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Feb. 1976), 101.

reflection in which they questioned their connections to imperialism and colonialism and began advocating for adapting Christianity to local cultural practices.[258] In China, this position was forcefully argued by the prominent American Protestant missionary Frank Rawlinson, whose 1925 book, *The Naturalization of Christianity in China*, called for "synthesizing" Christianity and Chinese religious practices.[259] Although the extent to which Christian missionaries actually implemented such changes was uneven at best, the idea of indigenization gained widespread currency as the best path toward building Christianity in China and elsewhere.[260] Influenced by the social gospel movement prominent within American Protestantism, missionaries also expanded the scope of their activities to include social welfare and philanthropic work such as building schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Among the most famous missionaries in the world, the China-born Pearl Buck strongly articulated the social gospel critique of the missionary movement in a well-publicized 1932 speech titled "Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?" Buck concluded her controversial speech:

> Above all, then, let the spirit of Christ be manifested by mode of life rather than by preaching. I am wearied unto death with this preaching. It deadens all thought, it confuses all issues, it is producing, in China at least, a horde of hypocrites, and in the theological seminaries a body of Chinese ministers which makes one despair for the future, because they are learning how to preach about Christianity rather than how to live the Christian life. Let us cease our talk for a time and cut off our talkers, and let us try to express our religion in terms of life.[261]

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[258] David A. Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 59-92.

[259] Hollinger, 61-63. On the history of the indigenization movement in China, see Albert Monshan Wu, "The Quest for an 'Indigenous Church': German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Indigenization Debates of the 1920s," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 122, No 1. (Feb. 2017), 85-114. As Wu points out, "indigenization" was a highly contested term, and different missionary groups and local Christians often disagreed sharply about what precisely indigenization entailed.

[260] The Chinese YMCA proved the Christian organization most committed to implementing indigenization, "devolving" practical leadership to Chinese Christians and becoming financially self-sustaining by the late 1920s. Jun Xing, "The American Social Gospel and the Chinese YMCA," The Journal of American-East Asian Relations, Vol. 4, No. ¾ (1996), 277-304.

[261] Pearl S. Buck, "Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?" *Harper's Magazine* (Jan. 1933), 155.

Buck's criticism of missionaries who arrogantly preached the gospel of Jesus Christ but failed to embody the Christian value of selfless service exemplified the increasingly liberal, modernist outlook of ecumenical Protestantism during this period.[262]

Both of these trends—indigenization and secularization—shaped the CCF's work in China during the post-WWII period. Founded by a Presbyterian minister, featuring longtime missionaries as the superintendents of many of its orphanages, and yet dedicated to the secular task of child welfare, the CCF was emblematic of the broader turn from proselytizing to social welfare work. The CCF also strongly emphasized indigenization to promote its work in China. Among the many dedications (*ti ci* 題詞) published in the CCF's Chinese-language magazine *Blessed Children* (*Fu'er* 福兒) were classical Confucian phrases such as "benevolence toward children" (*ci you* 慈幼), "treat all children as one's own" (*bu du zi qi zi* 不獨子其子) and "the young have the means to grow" (*you you suo zhang* 幼有所長). By interspersing such phrases among the magazine's many articles on Christianity, the CCF linked its Christian humanitarian program to traditional Confucian ideas about societal obligations to children. The CCF's commitment to indigenization was also reflected in the incorporation of elements of traditional Chinese familial practice into life at CCF-supported orphanages. For example, the Morning Star Orphanage in Guangzhou published its own "family precepts" (*jia xun* 家訓)—a traditional genre of Chinese literature in which the patriarch of a family wrote moral exhortations for younger generations.[263] As Clarke told the assembled children during a 1946 speech at the Morning Star Orphanage, "The reason China's Children Fund is now helping you is not at all so

[262] On this "evangelical-ecumenical divide," see Hollinger, 10-11, 83-88.

[263] Yan Yongqi, "Ertong jiaxun 兒童家訓" [Children's Family Precepts], *Fu'er*, No. 32 (Dec. 1950), 10.

that you will learn to become Americans, but rather so that you will learn to become good Chinese people."[264]

"The Most Economical and Efficient Investment a Christian Can Make"

While the CCF's Christian humanitarian program was influenced by decades-long trends toward indigenization and secularization, its adoption plan also offered a new vision of global Christianity rooted in direct, personal bonds between ordinary American Christians and the children of the non-Christian world. Rather than evangelize through traditional missionary work, the adoption plan incorporated everyday Americans into the project of Christianizing China by allowing them to serve as foster parents to individual Chinese children who would feel themselves a part of Christian families. In its fundraising materials, the CCF explicitly promoted the adoption plan as a new means of spreading Christianity. As one typical CCF advertisement stated, "As the contributor receives school reports, letters and perhaps occasionally an example of the child's school work, he gets to know the child and through exchange of letters can assist the child in Christian living."[265] CCF publicity materials also frequently noted that it required all of the orphanage-schools it supported to offer Christian instruction to the children.[266] Therefore, the CCF argued, its adoption plan was *the* most effective way to spread Christianity in China:

> Emphasis needs to be given, however, to the most effective method of bringing Christian ideals to China. In the orphanage schools of CCF children today are being taught by word and by example the Christian way of life. During their plastic years these children

[264] Si Tuxian, "Ka boshi shicha Guangzhou gu'er yuan ji 卡博士視察廣州孤兒院記" [Notes from Dr. Clarke's Inspection of Guangzhou Orphanages], *Fu'er*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1946), 3; "Ka boshi xiang ge yuan ertong xunhua 卡博士向各院兒童訓話" [Dr. Clarke's Instructions to the Children of Each Orphanage], *Fu'er*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1946), 3.

[265] "The CCF Adoption Plan," *China News* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 1949-1950), 2.

[266] "Statement of Policy with Reference to Christian Teaching as Voted By the Executive Committee of China's Children Fund," *China News*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1947), 4.

> are learning Christianity at its best. The future pillars of the native Christian churches of China are securing their instruction and inspiration in CCF orphanages. The most effective evangelism of China is the nurture of her children in the Christian faith. Dollar for dollar the investment in a child's life is the most economical and efficient investment a Christian can make.[267]

Despite its Christian character, the CCF encountered resistance from conservative missionary circles. The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was among the CCF's harshest critics. Especially because the CCF operated out of the Southern Baptist stronghold of Richmond, the Foreign Mission Board feared that its fundraising would "drain" money and resources from the fundamental task of proselytizing. On February 20, 1939, Charles E. Maddry, the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, wrote to J.R. Saunders, a Southern Baptist missionary and the superintendent of the CCF-supported Pu Kong Orphanage: "I fear that this gentleman [Clarke] working in Richmond in the Child Relief Work for China is going to stir up trouble throughout the South…I do wish so much that everybody would stick to their knitting and that all Baptists would stick to our plan of work and send the money through our regular channels."[268] Several months later, Maddry wrote to Saunders again to reproach him directly for his involvement with the CCF:

> This committee, working out of Richmond, is using your name and, according to your own letter here, you encouraged them in setting up this organization…I am sorry that you gave them the least bit of encouragement…If our missionaries, supported by this Board through all the years, would give themselves wholeheartedly to the program of Southern Baptists, without setting up these independent organizations that drain off the funds that ought to go through our regular channels, I think we would get a great deal further with our missionary program in China.[269]

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[267] "Will China Choose Democracy or Communism?" *China News*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1947), 1.

[268] Maddry to Saunders, Feb. 20, 1939, AR 551-2, Box 51, Folder 1939-1943, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives (hereinafter *SBHLA*).

[269] Maddry to Saunders, May 30, 1939, AR 551-2, Box 51, Folder 1939-1943, *SBHLA*.

By the 1940s, Maddry had gone public with his crusade against the CCF. For example, in April 1944 he published an article in the *Baptist Record* noting that the CCF did not have "the consent or the approval" of the Foreign Mission Board.[270]

In response, Saunders and the CCF developed explicitly religious justifications for the adoption plan. Responding to Maddry, Saunders focused on the opportunity to convert and baptize children, noting that "about half" of the baptisms he had recently performed were of children at the CCF's Pu Kong Orphanage. Saunders further argued that raising children at CCF orphanages provided an opportunity to train future leaders of the native church:

> "More results come to our church at Shiu Chow in a religious way from our Orphanage than all the other work that we do there including…the evangelistic work. I think in this great family of little children whose tender lives are wholly in our hands year by year we have the greatest opportunity to do a great work for Jesus Christ than we have in any other kind of work that we are doing at Shiu Chow.[271]

At least tactically conceding the Foreign Mission Board's argument that conversion was the ultimate end of Christian work in China, Saunders contended that the CCF's adoption plan was more effective than traditional proselytizing in achieving this goal. Saunders also frequently deployed biblical passages that he interpreted as proving "the fundamental emphasis God's word places on children."[272] Among his favorites was Matthew 25:45: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." For Saunders and the CCF, Chinese orphans stood in for "the least of these"—the most pitiful and helpless members of world society. The best measure of the progress of world Christianity was, therefore, the extent to which Christians extended material and spiritual help to these "least" members of the global community.

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[270] Charles E. Maddry, "Concerning Orphanage Work in China," *The Baptist Record*, April 6, 1944, 3.

[271] Saunders to Maddry, July 10, 1940, AR 551-2, Box 51, Folder 1939-1943, *SBHLA*.

[272] Saunders to Crawley, Oct. 23, 1956, AR 551-2, Box 51, Folder 1935-1967, *SBHLA*.

The Adoption Plan as *Bo'ai*

In addition to promoting the adoption plan to American donors as a way to participate directly in spreading Christianity in China, the CCF also sought to teach Chinese children to understand the adoption plan as part of a global Christian movement. In particular, the CCF used the traditional concept of Christian love—translated into Chinese using the classical phrase *bo'ai* 博愛 (literally, "universal love")—to explain the very untraditional practice of forging familial ties across national boundaries. In official government documents, CCF-supported orphanages often defined their institutional mission as "spreading Jesus's spirit of *bo'ai* among children."[273] Moreover, through its Chinese-language children's magazine *Blessed Children*, the CCF taught children that *bo'ai* was the core principle of Christianity. For example, one August 1947 article titled "Jesus's *Bo'ai*" explained, "If we want to know Jesus, we must first understand Jesus's *bo'ai*."[274] In May 1948, the Pu Kong Orphanage held a speech competition in which the first-prize winner, a middle-school student named Haoxin, spoke on the topic of "Jesus Christ's Spirit of *Bo'ai*."[275] For Haoxin, *bo'ai* referred specifically to humanitarian love that crossed national boundaries. He recounted the story of Jesus offering help to "the Samaritan woman from a different country" as evidence that the spirit of Christian love meant providing aid across

[273] For example, "Meihua ertong fuli hui Guangzhou tongguang gu'er yuan gaikuang biao 美華兒童福利會廣州童光孤兒院概況表" [China's Children Fund Guangzhou Morning Star Orphanage General Information Form], Oct. 20, 1948, 10-4-634-33, *GMA*.

[274] Huang Mingyuan [黃明遠], "Yesu de bo'ai 耶穌的博愛" [Jesus's Universal Love], *Fu'er*, Vol. 2, No 1 (Aug. 1947), 6.

[275] Bai Heng [白珩], "Jiang sai huaxu 講賽花絮" [Tidbits from the Speech Competition], *Fu'er*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (July 1948), 10.

national boundaries.[276] Haoxin's speech suggests the extent to which the CCF trained children to understand the help provided to them by foreign sponsors as an expression of Christian love.

Reflecting the Christian education provided at CCF orphanages, the language of Christian love also infused the letters that children wrote to their foster parents. For instance, Ting Sun wrote to his sponsor:

> Through we are far away from each other, I feel we meet each other when your letter come. I always think of you because you are loving me. How can I repay you? I must pray that God will help me do…Over 60 of our Home-mates have been baptized. I am one of them. I am very happy to be a Christian. Your supporting me is the special kindness of God.[277]

Ting Sun's letter explicitly connects his sponsor's love to his own conversion to Christianity. Quoted in CCF publicity materials, it served as evidence that by building close relationships with Chinese children through the adoption plan, American foster parents were helping to build a Christian China. Likewise, in February 1949 a girl named Chau Ho at the Kiu Kong orphanage wrote to her sponsor:

> I remember two weeks before Christmas a classmate received from her foster mother a very loveable doll. I thought to myself, how nice it would be if I were to have one like it. But who would have thought that I should receive one from you so very similar. I also received your letter, and the other things with the doll—a lovely pair of sleeping pyjamas, several small dresses. Thanks to God for His love which has given to me your loving heart and let me have these lovely things.[278]

Chau Ho's letter frames her sponsor's love as a manifestation of God's love. Nevertheless, recalling the familiar stereotype of "rice Christians" who professed to believe in Christianity to

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[276] "Yesu jidu bo'ai jingshen: pu sheng yuan yanjiang bisai di yi ming hao xinran (chuzhong zu) 耶穌基督博愛精神：普生院演講比賽第一名許好欣 (初中組)" [Jesus Christ's Spirit of Universal Love: Pu Kong Orphanage Speech Competition First Place Winner Xu Haoxin (middle school division)], *Fu'er*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (July 1948), 10.

[277] Edmund Janss, *Yankee Si! The Inspiring Story of Dr. J. Calvitt Clarke, His 36,000 Children and His Eloquent Answer to the Enemies of America Abroad* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1961), 48-49.

[278] Letter from Chau Ho, Feb. 1949, Kiu Kong Orphanage Folder, *CCF*.

obtain material benefits, she ultimately sees both God's and her sponsor's love as manifest in the "lovely" gifts she has received.

Figure 2.1. Hand-colored Christmas card from the CCF-supported Rennie's Mill Camp in Hong Kong. Christmas cards were a regular feature of the adoption plan at CCF orphanages, where Christianity was a mandatory part of children's education. J. Calvitt Clarke Box 2, *CCF*.

To be sure, the CCF did not introduce the notion of *bo'ai* as Christian love into China. In fact, the idea of Christian love—long translated as *bo'ai*—had emerged during the Republican period as one of the most broadly resonating aspects of Christian doctrine in China. As unlikely a figure as Chen Duxiu, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, had strongly endorsed the concept of *bo'ai* as one of the most important things Chinese people could learn from Christianity. In his 1920 essay "Christianity and the Chinese People," Chen wrote, "The root teachings of Christianity are only faith and love; the others are just leaves and twigs." Crucially, Chen believed that equality was key to the idea of Christian love, which he sometimes referred to as "the equal spirit of *bo'ai*" (平等的博愛精神). If Christ loved all of humanity, then all of humanity was equal under Christ's love. Or as Chen put it, paraphrasing Genesis,

"All humanity are brothers" (人與人是兄弟).[279] In light of Chen Duxiu's emphasis on *bo'ai* as a relationship of equality, the hierarchal dimensions of the CCF's reinvention of *bo'ai* through the adoption plan are all the clearer. For Chen Duxiu, the proper familial metaphor for Christian love was brotherhood. For the CCF, Christian love was expressed through the paternalistic relationship of "adoption"—in which American Christians were the "parents" and Chinese Christians their adopted children. It was through this deeply paternalistic recasting of universal love that the CCF's goal of spreading Christianity melded with its aim of projecting American international influence in the post-WWII period.

"Un-ugly Americans"

For the CCF, the mission of spreading Christianity was so closely related to the goal of promoting American influence in China that the two projects were often indistinguishable. In CCF publicity materials, the terms "Christianity," "democracy," and "America" are deployed as interchangeable synonyms. For example, one article in the CCF's English-language newsletter *China News* explained,

> "No one can visit China today without being forcibly impressed with the number of leaders in that country who are *Christians*. If that were not true, there would be far less hope of China's survival on the side of *democracy*. The churches of America have poured many millions into China…Even if we look at it from a purely selfish point of view, they have still been the best investment *America* has made in China."[280]

In this regard, the CCF's religious-political appeals for the adoption plan constituted an early example of what Arissa Oh calls "Christian Americanism." Defined as "a fusion of vaguely Christian principles with values identified as exceptionally 'American'…Christian Americanism

[279] Chen Duxiu, "Jidujiao yu zhongguoren 基督教與中國人" [Christianity and the Chinese People], *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth], Vol. 7, No. 3 (Feb. 1920), 15-22.

[280] "Will China Choose Democracy or Communism?" *China News*, Vol. V, No. 1 (Spring 1947). Emphasis added.

encapsulated the prevailing attitude that equated being a good Christian with being a good American."[281] To promote Christianity was also to promote democracy, and a Christian, democratic China was presumed to be in the "selfish" interest of the United States.

During WWII, the NARC had utilized the adoption plan as part of an explicitly political program to attract international support for China's war effort and enhance the prestige of the Nationalist Party abroad. After WWII, the CCF began to consider how the adoption plan could also be used to promote American influence in China. The CCF staunchly supported the Nationalist Party and believed that a Nationalist China under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, who had been baptized as a Methodist in 1930, constituted the best hope for a Christian, democratic, and U.S.-friendly China. But while the NARC had emphasized how the adoption plan could influence Americans' views of China, the CCF placed much more emphasis on how American foster parents could influence their adopted Chinese children's views of the United States. In later decades, the CCF would begin referring to foster parents as "un-ugly Americans" engaged in a form of personal diplomacy to bolster the image of the United States abroad.[282] By participating in the adoption plan, the CCF believed that these un-ugly Americans would not only demonstrate American benevolence and moral authority in China, they would also transform the United States into a place more worthy of emulation.

The CCF's publicity materials emphasized how its adoption plan fostered feelings of gratitude toward American sponsors, thereby helping to create a positive image of the United States as China's liberator and benefactor. In the fall of 1943, *China News* quoted T.S. Chen of China's National Child Welfare Association—which supported more than 2,000 children

[281] Oh, 79-80.

[282] Janss, 30-31. The phrase "un-ugly Americans" was a reference to Eugene Burdick and William Lederer's 1958 novel *The Ugly American*, which critiqued the arrogance and ignorance of the U.S. diplomatic corps in Asia.

through the CCF's adoption plan—as saying, "The influence of these 'adoptions' is deeply felt among our people. They tackle Sino-American friendly relations at the core—namely, in the very hearts of friends far away, unseen but so real."[283] In the summer of 1945, *China News* published a lengthy article written by F.C. Liu, also of the National Child Welfare Association, in which he explained how the exchange of gifts and letters through the adoption plan had "warmed the hearts of China's children toward America."[284] The CCF's overtly political appeals in turn influenced how other transnational aid organizations promoted their work in China. In 1947, J.R. Saunders left CCF to found his own organization, the American-Oriental Friendship Association (*zhongmei youyi xiehui* 中美友誼協會; hereinafter "AOFA"), which also fundraised for orphanages in China via the adoption plan. Saunders' AOFA promoted its adoption plan in even more explicitly political terms. For example, one April 1949 newsletter claimed, "It is far more profitable to spend a few millions building peace, cooperation, and love between the children and youth of the East and West than it is to spend billions on atomic bombs and battle-ships."[285]

The CCF circulated examples of children's letters as evidence of how the adoption plan helped spread American influence in China. For example, in 1944 it published a letter from a boy named Min Kei to his foster mother Maggie in which he wrote, "My teacher told me that you wrote your letter to me on George Washington's Birthday. I know who he is. I have heard stories about him. In China, we also have a General Washington. He is our Generalissimo! He

[283] "The Influence of These 'Adoptions'," *China News*, Vol 1., No. 2 (Fall 1943), 3.

[284] F.C. Liu, "This Century is for the Children," *China News*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Summer 1945), 1-2.

[285] "American-Oriental Friendship Association Newsletter #3," April 1949, Series 4, Box 3, Folder 6, Charles Luther Boynton Papers, Missionary Research Library Archives, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary (*CLB*).

is also as brave as your Washington."[286] Taking George Washington as a model against which to compare Chinese leaders, Min Kei's letter suggested how the adoption plan encouraged Chinese children to see the United States as a model for China's future. The cumulative effect of all the personal relationships forged through the adoption plan, the CCF argued, would be a generation of Chinese children deeply grateful to the United States. The CCF circulated one story about a Communist cadre who visited a CCF orphanage in Guangzhou to lecture the children about Russia's help to the Chinese people. But when the cadre asked the children which country had helped China the most, they nevertheless responded, "America!"[287]

"All the Frustrated Motherhood Suddenly Released"

CCF built the adoption plan into one of the most successful humanitarian fundraising programs of the post-WWII period by connecting it to the wider projects of spreading Christianity and American influence abroad. However, the CCF also tailored its publicity materials to appeal to more specific constituencies within American society. Among the groups the CCF targeted in particular were childless women. As Elaine Tyler May has argued, the cultural ascendancy of the nuclear family in the post-WWII period constituted a form of "domestic containment" in which the "traditional" family was imagined as a safe haven from anxieties about nuclear war and subversive social forces.[288] In this context, "procreation took on almost mythic proportions" and childlessness came to be viewed as "deviant, selfish, and pitiable." For women in particular, "motherhood was the ultimate fulfillment of female sexuality

[286] "From an Adoptee in China to His Foster Mother in America," *China News*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1944), 4.

[287] "The Adoption Plan," *China News*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 1950-1951), 4; Minutes of Meeting of Executive Board of China's Children Fund, Incorporated, October 10, 1950, Box IA, Folder 9, *CCF*.

[288] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

and the primary source of a woman's identity."[289] However, this idealized version of family life was not attainable for all segments of society.[290] As the postwar baby boom enhanced the social stigma of childlessness, infertile couples increasingly turned to adoption as a means of attaining the child-centered family ideal. But the demand for healthy adoptable babies quickly overwhelmed the "supply." In 1955, Senator Estes Kefauver testified, "There has been a tremendous increase over the last 10 years in the demand for children for adoption. As a result, the demand has far exceeded the number of babies available."[291] For the CCF, the pressure on women to perform the social role of motherhood constituted a distinct marketing opportunity.

The CCF often advertised its adoption plan as a way for childless women to experience the joys of motherhood. In the fall of 1947, *China News* published a testimonial from a female doctor who praised the adoption plan for enabling "old maids" like herself to experience the joys of motherhood:

> I am surprised at the thrill I had when I said to my mother and my friends, "I have a son in China." All the frustrated motherhood suddenly released, did surprise even me—in spite of the hundreds of babies I have delivered. It was so different to say "My son!" I recommend the experience for all the "old maid" school teachers, editors, saleswomen, etc., that you can reach.[292]

The author focuses not on the experience of sponsoring a Chinese child but rather on the experience of *telling* her mother and friends about her "adopted" Chinese son. She promotes the adoption plan not so much as an alternative form of motherhood but rather as a way to relieve the

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[289] May, 135-142.

[290] Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*: *American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York, Basic Books, 1992); Sarah Potter, *Everybody Else: Adoption and the Politics of Domestic Diversity in Postwar America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014).

[291] Quoted in Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 6-7.

[292] "A Letter from a Sponsor Regarding Her Adopted Boy," *China News*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1947), *CCF*.

social pressure to have children. Other CCF advertisements made emotional appeals for the adoption plan as a last chance for the childless to leave their mark on posterity:

> Some of us, for one reason or another, have never had a child of our own. Others of us have had and lost them. Some of these adopted children will be brought to America eventually by their foster parents but if your closest contact to "your" child is only by letter, the child still will feel he belongs. You will be the only parent that child has. And you may find that you belong, too, and that in your child you are building up something that will live on after you are gone.[293]

On one level, such advertisements testify to the normative power of the nuclear family ideal in postwar America. On another level, the CCF's advertisements appropriated the symbolism of the nuclear family to legitimize a very different type of "adoptive" relationship that crossed national and racial lines, overflowed the boundaries of the domestic home, and was rooted in intimacy rather than biology. The extraordinary popularity of the adoption plan in postwar America suggests that even during the apex of the nuclear family ideal, alternative forms of family making were beginning to acquire widespread legitimacy.

"Selling" Children

As the adoption plan grew in popularity during the post-WWII period, the CCF was confronted with the task of facilitating the circulation of an ever-expanding volume of publicity materials, photographs, gifts, and letters on a transnational scale. To manage this unwieldy process, the CCF developed and implemented standard practices regarding how these materials were produced, what information they contained, and along what routes they traveled. The CCF's efforts to standardize the adoption plan began with creating a uniform set of publicity materials to introduce potential American donors to the idea of adopting a Chinese child. Somewhat paradoxically, the CCF's boilerplate advertisements promised a substantive, deeply

[293] "The CCF Adoption Plan," *China News*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 1949-1950), *CCF*.

personal relationship that approximated the intimacy of the parent-child bond. For example, one typical appeal in *China News* emphasized foster parents' role in providing "guidance" for their adopted children:

> Even more than a child's dependence upon an adult for food and shelter, is his dependence upon him for ideals and visions. A child is but plastic clay in an adult's hand—to be moulded into evil or good. The homeless, hungry children of the Orient need more than food or shelter. They need guidance by those who are true friends of children. [294]

CCF advertisements often included rows of pictures of children available for adoption, detailing the different available payment plans and recommending that prospective sponsors indicate a backup choice in case their preferred child had already been adopted.[295] The CCF explicitly embraced the commodification of children implicit in such fundraising strategies. In the 1944 issue of *China News*, Clarke relayed the following story: "Once a stranger on a train asked me what I sold. He looked surprised when I answered—'Children.' After I had explained to him he said thoughtfully, 'I think you sell the finest article in the world'."[296] Another CCF publicity article bluntly stated, "Put a child on your shopping list."[297] In an era in which consumer choice increasingly defined the ideal family life, a "real son or daughter" could be placed on a shopping list without apparent contradiction.[298]

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[294] "The CCF Adoption Plan, *China News* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter-1949-1950), 2-3.

[295] *China News* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1946), 3.

[296] "A Recipe for Children," *China News* Vol. 2, No. 4 (Summer 1944), 2.

[297] "Will China Choose Democracy or Communism?" *China News* Vol. 5. No. 1 (Spring 1947), 4.

[298] On the link between Cold War politics and the role of consumer goods in defining idealized family life, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). On the gap between the 1950s American family in nostalgic memory and the social realities facing families in the 1950s, see Stephanie Coontz*, The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

Spring Issue, 1946 CHINA NEWS Page 3

REN-MEI Fifteen years old. Diligent, careful, loyal and honest. An orphan.

TEH-CHANG Eight years old. In delicate health but eager to do his best. He is parentless.

CHIEN-LIEH Age nine. Well behaved. Parents dead.

CHIEN-EN Eight years old, diligent and careful child. An orphan.

TEH-MEI Six years old, a bright child. Parents dead.

TEH-CHEN Five years old, of pleasant disposition and obedient. His father and mother both died of typhoid.

NOTE: The ages given, according to the Chinese way of reckoning, are from one to two years older than we would compute them. Thus Teh-Chen is really only three or four; Tem-Mei four or five, etc., by Western count.

These six children have been admitted into the Sandford Children's Home, a Methodist orphanage at Chaotung, West China. They are all members of the Miao, one of the poorest of the aboriginal tribes of West China. An earnest request from an American Army Chaplain in China has come to China's Children Fund to support these children.

We shall be glad to assign one or more of the children to any individual or group desirious of "adopting" them. The cost per child is $120.00 a year, payable in cash or pledge of ten dollars a month. There is no obligation to care for the child more than a year, unless the sponsor wishes to do so. We suggest the sponsor designate a first and second choice. The name, address, picture and further information about the child "adopted" will be furnished the child's sponsor. It is possible to write to the child, if the sponsor wishes.

Figure 2.2. An advertisement for the CCF's adoption plan in *China News* invited sponsors to select among six children based on their photographs and brief descriptions of their personalities. The advertisement recommended that sponsors designate both a first and second choice in case their preferred child had already been "adopted." *China News* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1946), 3.

Nevertheless, reading through the internal correspondence of the CCF, one thing that emerges clearly is the depth of Clarke's personal commitment to making the adoption plan live up to its promise of fostering meaningful relationships. As Clarke wrote to Verent Mills in September 1946, "We want our adoption plan to be real and not just a sort of fake scheme for raising funds."[299] Clarke was tireless in his attempts to impress upon the staffs of CCF orphanages the stakes of making the adoption plan as satisfying as possible for sponsors. He concluded one memo with the all-caps declaration:

> THE INVESETMENT IN TIME AND EFFORT, BOTH ON THE PART OF ORPHANAGE STAFFS IN CHINA AND OF THE CCF OFFICE STAFF IN AMERICA, IN KEEPING THESE "MOTHERS" AND "FATHERS" INFORMED ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN, WILL BE SUPREMELY WORTHWHILE—BOTH IN POINT OF THE PRACTICAL HELP THEY ARE ANXIOUS AND WILLING TO RENDER IF WE MEET THEM HALF-WAY, AND IN VIEW OF AN INIMITABLE SERVICE IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS WHICH THE ADOPTION PLAN INVOLVES.[300]

[299] Clarke to Mills, Sept. 9, 1946, Kiu Kong Orphanage Folder, *CCF*.

[300] "General Instructions Re Adoptions," 17-1-117-70, *GMA*.

Yet Clarke often complained that the almost exclusively Chinese staffs of CCF orphanages did not put sufficient effort into the adoption plan. He confided to Mills, "We have great difficulty in getting reports from some of our workers. I know they are busy and that they do not realize the job it is to finance our program." Moreover, even when Clarke did receive the materials he requested from CCF-funded orphanages, he was not always pleased with their contents:

> Some of our workers, in making reports on the children, state that the boy or girl is lazy, or that the parents threw the child out, or that the child is not very bright, etc. We certainly do not want our workers to be untruthful but wish they could tell the better things about the child. You would be surprised how often, especially the Chinese, our workers send information about the child that would have a tendency to discourage the child's sponsor from continuing the child's support.[301]

The CCF's solution to the problem of how to create deep, personal relationships between children and their sponsors was to standardize procedures for carrying out the adoption plan and build a well-oiled transnational bureaucracy to implement them. There was thus an unspoken irony at the heart of the CCF's adoption plan: the unique, personal relationships forged between American sponsors and Chinese children were based on formulaic documents and routine procedures that were both rigidly enforced and meticulously hidden from view.

The Paperwork of Global Intimacy

After responding to one of CCF's advertisements with a commitment to adopt a child for at least one year, sponsors received what the CCF referred to internally as an "assignment report"—including the adopted child's name, photograph, and personal history as well as information about the orphanage where the child lived.[302] The CCF's China office in

[301] Clarke to Mills, Sept. 9, 1946, Kiu Kong Orphanage Folder, *CCF*.

[302] "General Instructions Re Adoptions," 17-1-117-70, *GMA*.

Guangzhou provided detailed instructions to its affiliated orphanages on how to prepare every element of the assignment report. For each newly accepted child, orphanages were required to provide two half-body photographs measuring one *cun* (approximately 3.3 centimeters) in length.[303] They placed particular emphasis on the quality of the photographs:

> Individual pictures should present each child to best advantage and should be as clear and flawless as possible in order to lend themselves to reproduction and enlargement. All children receive the greatest sympathy but it is only a human trait expressing itself when sponsors evince particular gratification in helping bright, neat, attractive, promising looking children.[304]

The CCF's meticulous attention to the quality of photographs reflected its understanding of their deep importance to the success of the adoption plan. One foster mother wrote to the CCF after receiving her adopted child's photograph, "I think you chose the right boy for me. I like his looks and, from my method of diagnosis, he seems to have the appearance and personal qualities for success and leadership."[305]

Besides the photograph, the other essential aspect of the assignment report was a "personal history" that provided sponsors with information about their adopted child's biography and personality. The CCF provided orphanages with standard forms listing various categories of information to be included, such as family background, progress in school, interests, and a personal message for the child's sponsor. In practice, however, the level of detail provided in these forms varied considerably across the different CCF-sponsored orphanages. The Canaan

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[303] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui huanan qu gu'er shenqing jiaoyang jianze"美華兒童福利會華南區孤兒申請教養簡則 [Children Fund South China District General Regulations for Orphan Applications for Education and Upbring], Feb. 12, 1946, 17-1-121-87, *GMA*; "Mei hua ertong fuli hui huanan qu gu'er shenqing jianze" 美華兒童福利會華南區孤兒申請簡則 [China's Children Fund South China District General Regulations for Orphan Applications], *Fu'er* 福兒 [Blessed Children] Vol. 1, No. 1 (1946), 2.

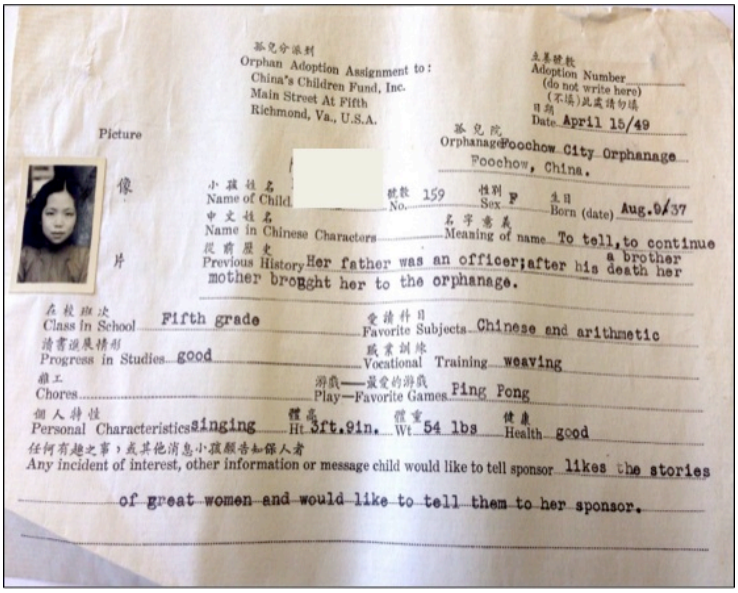
[304] "General Instructions Re Adoptions," 17-1-117-70, *GMA*.

[305] "A Letter from a Sponsor Regarding Her 'Adopted' Boy," *China News* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1947), 3.

Home (*jianan gu'er yuan* 迦南孤兒院) in Beijing provided especially detailed information. For example, the sponsor of a boy named "Asaph" would have received a wealth of information about his family background, personality, and life at school:

> Asaph's father and mother are dead. His father was a rickshaw puller. He had two uncles, two younger sisters, and an older brother. This boy likes to study and he is preparing to take the examination for entrance into Yenching Industrial School. This is a fine opportunity and will enable him to learn useful trades…The boys also learn to cook, and are taught to keep the rooms and the yard very clean. In the summertime they go swimming and fishing in the clear stream from the Jade Fountain which is nearby…Asaph, in milking and caring for the goats, was found to do his work faithfully and well. [306]

On the other hand, the sponsors of a boy named Dai Gang at the Foochow City Orphanage may have been disappointed to read that he had "no particular message for sponsor."[307] Despite its best efforts to control the initial portrait of children presented in the assignment reports, the CCF remained dependent upon the orphanages it funded to furnish information about the children.


孤兒分派到
Orphan Adoption Assignment to:
China's Children Fund, Inc.
Main Street At Fifth
Richmond, Va., U.S.A.

立基號數
Adoption Number
(do not write here)
(不填)此處請勿填
日期 Date April 15/49

Picture 像 片

孤兒院 Orphanage Foochow City Orphanage
Foochow, China.

小孩姓名 Name of Child
號數 No. 159
性別 Sex F
生日 Born (date) Aug.6/37
中文姓名 Name in Chinese Characters
名字意義 Meaning of name To tell, to continue a brother
從前歷史 Previous History Her father was an officer; after his death her mother brought her to the orphanage.

在校班次 Class in School Fifth grade
愛讀科目 Favorite Subjects Chinese and arithmetic
讀書進展情形 Progress in Studies good
職業訓練 Vocational Training weaving
雜工 Chores
遊戲——最愛的遊戲 Play—Favorite Games Ping Pong
個人特性 Personal Characteristics singing
體高 Ht 3ft.9in.
體重 Wt 54 lbs
健康 Health good
任何有趣之事，或其他消息小孩願告知保人者
Any incident of interest, other information or message child would like to tell sponsor likes the stories of great women and would like to tell them to her sponsor.

Figure 2.3. Personal history from the CCF-supported Foochow City Orphanage. Personal histories were provided to sponsors as part of the "assignment report" they received after committing to sponsor a child through CCF.

[306] "Children's Histories with Photographs, Canaan Home for Children," February 17, 1947, 17-1-116-1, *GMA*.

[307] Foochow City Orphanage Case Files, J. Calvitt Clarke Box 2, *CCF*.

After the receipt of the initial assignment report containing the adopted child's photograph and personal history, the adoptive relationship consisted primarily of the exchange of letters. Children were required to send their foster parents two letters per year as well as additional thank-you letters whenever they received a gift from their foster parents. Of paramount importance to the CCF was ensuring that these letters were (or at least appeared to be) the authentic work of the individual adopted child. In an official letter to all CCF-sponsored orphanages, the CCF office in Guangzhou emphasized that it was "absolutely not permitted for one child to write out letters for several children." The letter explained that some sponsors had adopted multiple children in the same orphanage, and although they generally could not read Chinese, they would be able to recognize if letters purporting to be from different children were written in the same hand.[308] For similar reasons, the CCF also insisted, "Every time the children write letters, each must write according to his or her own ideas. It is absolutely not permitted for several children's letters to use the same ideas or language." Beyond requiring that children wrote in their own words and with their own hand, the CCF also established meticulous requirements regarding the appearance of each letter. One set of instructions from the CCF office in Guangzhou specified that "for the sake of standardization" (*yi zi huayi* 以資劃一), "from now on when any child writes a letter, regardless of whether it is an ordinary letter or a thank-you letter, they should use the letter paper prepared by this organization for each orphanage."[309] To avoid the jarring experience of foster parents receiving a letter from a name

[308] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui zhongguo banshichu zhi quanguo suo shu ge yuan gonghan san ze" 美華兒童福利會中國辦事處致全國所屬各院公函三則 [Three Official Letters from the China's Children Fund China Office to all affiliated orphanages in China], *Fu'er* Vol. 2, No. 5 (1948), 2.

[309] "Wei 38 nian ertong yu renyangren tongxun xu yu 7 yue 1 ri zhi qian bantuo you" 為三十八年兒童與認養人通訊須於七月一日之前辦妥由 [Re: correspondence between children and their sponsors for the year 1949 must be completed before July 1st], April 20, 1949, 17-1-120-27, *GMA*.

they did not recognize, CCF guidelines further stipulated that the letters must spell children's names exactly in accordance with the romanizations provided to each orphanage by the CCF. The CCF even codified such minute details as the requirement that children use the same ink they used to write the original Chinese letter when signing their romanized name.[310]

Beyond regulations designed to ensure that children's letters appeared authentic, the CCF also maintained an ever-expanding list of items children were prohibited from writing in their letters. Some of these rules were geared toward preventing children from writing anything that implied the lack of a meaningful relationship with their foster parents. For instance, children were not allowed to write that they do not recognize their sponsor's name and address. They were also prohibited from writing anything that might suggest they were exploiting their foster parents for money. For example, children were not allowed to complain "like a beggar" about things they lacked in the orphanage.[311] They were further forbidden from asking for additional money or material goods unless their sponsors specifically asked them for gift ideas. More surprisingly, children were instructed not to date their letters.[312] There were often long delays between when children wrote their letters and when their sponsors received them—to the extent that some orphanages had children write Christmas cards in August to ensure they reached their foster parents on time.[313] To avoid calling attention to these lengthy temporal gaps, the CCF simply asked children not to date their letters.

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[310] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui gonghan" 美華兒童福利會公函 [China's Children Fund Official Letter], *Fu'er* Vol. 2, No. 12 (Jan. 1949), 2.

[311] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui zhongguo banshichu zhi quanguo suo shu ge yuan gonghan san ze."

[312] 17-1-120-27, *GMA*.

[313] "Wei chengbao ben yuan liu qi yue fen yuanwu banli qingxing ji shouzhi qingxing qi jianhe beian you" 為呈報本院六七月份院務辦理情形暨收支情形乞鑒核備案由 [Re: Submitting a report on orphanage business and revenues and expenditures for the months of June and July for Inspection and Approval], Aug. 16, 1949, 17-1-115-35, *GMA*.

In order to make its adoption plan work smoothly, the CCF not only instructed children on what *not* to write, it also had to teach them what *to* write. To this effect, the CCF's monthly Chinese-language magazine *Blessed Children* included articles designed to provide children with guidelines for epistolary communication with their American foster parents. For instance, in the March 1948 issue Calvin Lee, the Director of the CCF's South China District Orphanages Association, published an article titled "The Art of Letter Writing" that sought to teach children to effectively communicate their gratitude to their foster parents. Lee's article begins by expressing his appreciation for what a difficult and odd task it was for Chinese children to write letters to American adults:

> China's Children Fund's currently requires every child to write to his or her foster parent twice per year. This is not an easy task! It's not easy for adults to cultivate the habit of letter writing, let alone for ordinary children! …It's not easy to pick up our pens and write letters to friends and family in China, let alone to find the words to say to foreign friends!"

According to Lee, the fundamental difference between American and Chinese epistolary style was that while Chinese letters relied on a vast store of conventional expressions, American letters were frank in tone and specific in substance:

> In their letters, Americans always describe things in great detail. For example, if they know that a friend has headaches, then they will go ahead and ask after the friend's headaches—which is not at all like quite the conventional phrase we would be accustomed to use: "I have heard recently that your honorable body is indisposed." While expressions in books like *Letters from Autumn Water Retreat* or *Letters from Snow Swan Retreat* are elegant and refined, they are not even appropriate for modern Chinese correspondence, let alone for use in foreign languages![314]

[314] *Letters from Autumn Water Retreat* (秋水軒尺牘) and *Letters from Snow Swan Retreat* (雪鴻軒尺牘), collections of Xu Jiacun's (許葭村) and Gong Weizhai's (龔未斋) letters respectively, were the two most influential models for epistolary writing in the Qing Dynasty. See Daniel Z. Kadar, *Historical Chinese Letter Writing* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 132.

Lee instructed CCF children to adopt the American way of letter writing, which he summarized as "Call a spade a spade – and sprinkle in a little humor." As an example, he described thank-you notes written by children at one CCF orphanage to a sponsor who had sent bags of sweets:

> Recently there was a sponsor who sent each child a bag of sweets. In our thank-you letters, we especially brought up that among all the countries on earth China gets to enjoy candy the least. On average Australians enjoy the most candy, about 100 pounds per year. But Chinese people only have about two pounds per year. Writing in this way not only demonstrates how much we appreciate the sweets that we received, it also lets the giver know how precious his gift was!"[315]

Echoing New Culture Movement intellectuals who argued that China must replace the "dead" language of classical Chinese with a modern, vernacular writing style in order to engage with the twentieth-century world, Lee argued that Chinese children would have to learn to express themselves in frank, direct prose in order to build personal relationships across national and cultural boundaries.

In a translingual twist on the popular letter-writing manuals for students consisting of exemplary letters for children to imitate, *Blessed Children* also published Chinese translations of American children's letters for use as models. A January 1949 article titled "What Kind of Letter to Write?" included a Chinese translation of a letter an American boy wrote to the Chinese child his family sponsored through the adoption plan. Praising the letter for its clarity and wealth of detail, the article offered it as a model for CCF children to imitate when writing back to their foster families:

> I am in seventh grade in school, and now I am 12 years old. I have been studying in this school since I was five years old. I have a little brother who is nine years old. Right now it is summer vacation. My brother goes to the recreation center and I go to the YMCA. We have all kinds of different activities there. On Wednesdays and Fridays we go on field trips, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays we have day camp. At 9AM we leave home with our lunches packed and go to the camp. We stay there all afternoon, and in

[315] Li Qirong, "Xie xin de yishu" 寫信的藝術 [The Art of Letter Writing], *Fu'er* Vol. 2, No. 7 (1948), 5.

> the evening do exercises and swimming. This is my fourth year coming to this camp. I plan to do many different things while I'm in the camp.[316]

Beyond simply providing children with guidelines and templates for their own letters, the CCF's efforts to cultivate global standards for epistolary communication suggest how it conceptualized the relationship between global intimacy and literary modernity in China.[317] Only by replacing inherited habits of thought and speech with those favored in the modern West could Chinese children learn to cultivate meaningful relationships with people abroad. At the same time, the very process of participating in transnational and translingual epistolary exchanges would expose a generation of Chinese children to new ways of writing and feeling that would prepare them to participate in the modern world.

The Bureaucracy of Global Intimacy

In order to ensure compliance with its standards for children's letters, the CCF built an expansive transnational bureaucracy dedicated to regulating, reviewing, tracking, and—if necessary—censoring children's letters. The first task of the CCF bureaucracy was to ensure that children wrote their letters at the appointed times. An August 21, 1946 letter from the CCF's Guangzhou office to orphanage directors reminded them, "Whenever any sponsored child receives a letter from their foster parents, you must immediately have them write a response. When the child has written a reply, it should be translated by someone at the orphanage and sent

[316] Li Kaowen, "Xie shenme xin?" 寫甚麼信 [What Kind of Letter to Write], *Fu'er* Vol. 2, No. 12 (1949), 5.

[317] On the relationship between translation and modernity in China, see Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

along with the original to our office."[318] On May 25, 1947, the office sent a follow-up letter admonishing those orphanages with children who still had not written to their sponsors:

> The majority of the children supported by this organization have already been assigned their foster parents. Now, in order to allow their foster parents to have a clear picture of their foster children's living situations in the orphanages, we need to have each orphan at each orphanage affiliated with our organization send this information to their foster parents once per year. You were already notified of this in an official letter dated August 21, 1946. While we have on record that many of these letters have indeed been sent to our office, as there remain a considerable number who have not yet complied with our regulations, we are again sending out this additional reminder.[319]

By 1948, the CCF was threatening to suspend funding to orphanages that did not send children's letters on time. In January the CCF wrote to orphanage directors, "Every orphanage must send Chinese and English sponsor letters by the end of February. Those whose letters are delinquent will not receive funds for the month of March."[320]

Each one of the thousands of letters children wrote each year then traveled a tortuous itinerary through the various levels of the CCF bureaucracy before finally reaching their foster parents in the United States. At the CCF-supported Lingnan Industrial School, the head teacher

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[318] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui huanan qu zhi suoshu ge gu'er yuan gonghan" 美華兒童福利會華南區致所屬各孤兒院公函 [Official Letter from China's Children Fund South China District Conference to Affiliated Orphanages], *Fu'er* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1946), 2.

[319] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui zhi suoshu ge gu'er yuan gonghan" 美華兒童福利會致所屬各院公函 [Official Letter from China's Children Fund to Affiliated Orphanages], *Fu'er* Vol. 1, No. 11 (1947), 2.

[320] "Hanfu suo shi si dian chu yi dian yu you dongshihui taolun ling xing hanfu wai qiyu san dian ye jun zunzhao banli you" 函復所示四點除一點於由董事會討論另行函復外其餘三點業均遵照辦理由 [Re: Replying to the four points of instruction, except for the first point, which will be responded to separately after it is discussed by the board of directors, the remaining three points have already been handled in accordance with the instructions], Jan. 25, 1948, 17-1-124-85, *GMA*; "Mei hua ertong fuli hui guanyu gaozhi shijie hongshizi hui beiquan ciyou yuan xianqi huiji renyangzhe zhong ying wen mingce ji lingqu jingfei biaozhun gonghan"美華兒童福利會關於告知世界紅十字會北泉慈幼院限期匯寄認養者中英文名冊及領取經費標準等公函 [China's Children Fund official letter regarding informing the World Red Swastika Society Beiquan Benevolent Children's Home of the deadlines for sending Chinese and English sponsor name register and standards for receiving funds], Jan. 2, 1948, 0105-0002-00008-0000-061-000, *CMA*.

of each grade was responsible for collecting children's letters by the appointed date.[321] Once the letters were collected, it was the responsibility of each orphanage to provide English translations directly below the original Chinese on special letter paper provided by the CCF's Guangzhou office.[322] For tracking purposes, the orphanage was also required to mark each child's letter with three separate identifiers: the child's English name (following romanizations provided by the CCF), an orphanage number (*yuan hao* 院號), and an adoption number (*renyang hao* 認養號).[323] Each orphanage then sent the children's letters to the CCF office in Guangzhou, which forwarded the letters to the CCF office in Richmond, which in turn forwarded them to their foster parents. Children were prohibited from sending any correspondence directly to their sponsors, and orphanages would stop receiving CCF funds for any child found to have done so.[324] Clarke explained the reason for this rule in a detailed set of instructions to CCF orphanages:

> It is very important that letters from children be handled carefully. We have no wish to put a censorship on the children's letters but, because several rather disgustingly begging letters (apparently inspired by adults outside the orphanage) have been received by Sponsors, we are now asking that all letters be supervised by the Superintendent of the orphanage and that they be sent to this office for forwarding—never direct to Sponsor. We are sorry to be arbitrary about this but we do not want unscrupulous persons to destroy the fine relationships we are trying to build up. Please impress on the children that they must not have an outsider write letters directly to Sponsors for them and that begging letters are apt to make them "lose face" with Sponsors.

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[321] "Lingnan ertong gongyisuo di yi ci jiaodao huiyi lu" 嶺南兒童工藝所第一次教導會議錄 [Records of the first lingnan industrial school teachers' meeting], March 18, 1947, 20-3-6-1, *GMA*.

[322] 17-1-120-27, *GMA*.

[323] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui zhongguo banshichu zhi quanguo suo shu ge yuan gonghan san ze"

[324] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui gonghan" 美華兒童福利會公函 [China's Children Fund official letter], Aug. 24, 1946, 17-1-118-43, *GMA*.

By the time a child's letter reached his or her foster parents, it had been reviewed by the head teacher of his or her grade, the orphanage staff member tasked with translation, the orphanage director, the CCF office in Guangzhou, and CCF headquarters in Richmond.

Letters found to have violated the rules could be censored at multiple levels of the CCF bureaucracy. For example, early in 1949 a young woman named Rui-tang, who had recently reached the age of eighteen and "graduated" from the Pu Kong orphanage, wrote to her foster parents with a special request: she planned to go to Guangzhou to continue her studies, and she asked that her foster parents send money to cover her travel. Rui-tang had followed the CCF's standard procedures in writing the letter: first writing out her letter in Chinese, having it translated into English by a teacher at Pu Kong, and then sending it to the CCF office in Guangzhou to be forwarded to the United States. The Guangzhou office, however, refused to send the letter. Responding to Rui-tang to explain their reasoning, they wrote, "This kind of letter of request does not conform to the rules of our organization's American headquarters, as sponsored children are not permitted to write letters requesting any money or material goods from their foster parents." Therefore, they concluded, "We cannot forward the English letter for you."[325] Letters were also occasionally censored once they reached the CCF headquarters in Richmond. For example, in February 1951, Helen Clarke flagged two especially political letters from children at the Pu Kong Orphanage:

> The children seem to be working for the government according to Chai Cheung with his story of being a tax collector. Luk Sing Cheung's letter sounds as if they may be getting some military training – with its "practice in shooting." Of course, this may only refer to darts, slings or other toys. But anyone would question it now.

[325] *Zhi rui tang jian han* 致瑞堂箋函 [Letter to Rui Tang], Feb. 4, 1949, 零 18-44-8, *GMA*

Received just as the CCF was evacuating from Communist China and refocusing on other parts of East Asia, Clarke decided not to send the letters to the children's sponsors.[326] As the CCF broadened its geographic reach, it would need to refine the bureaucratic procedures it developed in China in order to coordinate transnational intimate relationships on an ever-expanding scale.

The CCF and Legal Adoption in China

From its earliest days in China, the CCF had fielded frequent inquiries about the possibility of legally adopting children. For example, on September 5, 1948, a woman named Lucille wrote to the CCF to inquire about whether she and her mother might legally adopt "one or two Little Ones":

> I am comfortably situated, with a modest income. While I am not a Millionaire, I can afford to care for and to educate one or two children…I know the children are well taken care of at the various Orphanages but mother and I would, simply, adore having the companionship of one or two Little Ones.[327]

The CCF leant some encouragement to such requests by hinting at the possibility of legal international adoption in its publicity materials. One advertisement for the adoption plan claimed, "Some of these adopted children will be brought to America eventually by their foster parents."[328] Nevertheless, actually coordinating legal international adoption from China during the 1940s was all but impossible. While the Chinese exclusion laws were repealed by the Magnuson Act in 1943, Chinese immigration to the United States remained restricted to a miniscule quota of only 105 people annually.[329] In 1948, Clarke wrote to the Immigration and

[326] Helen Clarke to Mills, Feb. 13, 1951, Box IB1, Folder 2, *CCF*.

[327] Letter from Lucille to Calvitt Clarke, September 5, 1948, Box IB21, Folder 16, *CCF*.

[328] "The CCF Adoption Plan," *China News* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 1949-1950), 3.

[329] Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 214.

Naturalization Service inquiring into the possibility of facilitating legal adoptions of sponsored children in China, but he was informed that "the adopted child of an American citizen is not entitled to nonquota or preference status in the issuance of an immigration visa."[330] As the Chinese immigration quota was already oversubscribed, adopting children from China was effectively impossible. Clarke wrote to another woman who had requested to legally adopt two Chinese children: "[I]t so happens that their quota is filled for the next 10 years...I am sorry that I have to write this, what may seem to you to be a very disappointing reply, but the powers that be seem to have made it as hard as possible with government red tape."[331]

Although the CCF could not yet facilitate international adoption to the United States, it did regularly arrange for domestic adoptions within China—both to extended relatives and to strangers looking to adopt a son to serve as their heir. The practice of adopting a son to secure an heir has a long history in China. Most commonly, men without a biological son adopted a boy from within their own lineage. Although legal codes and other normative texts prohibited adoption from outside the surname group, in practice such adoptions were quite common.[332] The near absolute need for an heir to continue the family line, along with high child mortality rates and the limited supply of legally and ritually suitable children for adoption, combined to create a strong need for adoption practices that bent the rules. The adoption of an heir from outside the lineage was in turn justified by the view that sincere filial sentiment could make up for the

[330] "General Information Regarding Visas for Immigrants," Box IB21, Folder 16, *CCF*.

[331] Calvitt Clarke to Mullins, February 28, 1950, Box IB26, Folder 1, *CCF*.

[332] The roots of the prohibition on adoption from outside the lineage date to the pre-Qin *Book of Etiquette and Ceremony* (*yi li* 儀禮), which stated that the adoption of an heir was limited to members of the same lineage (*zu* 族). The *Zuo Commentary* (*zuo zhuan* 左傳) states that the spirits of the dead do not accept sacrifices from those who do not share their ancestry. The prohibition on cross-surname adoption was codified as law in the dynastic codes from the Tang Dynasty onward. On the textual roots of the Confucian prohibition of cross-surname adoption see, I.J. McMullen, "Non-Agnatic Adoption: A Confucian Controversy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* No. 35 (1975), 133-189.

absence of biological kinship ties. This view was often articulated with reference to a famous line from the *Book of Poetry*: "The wasp raises the offspring of the moth" (*mingling you zi, guoluo fu zhi* 螟蛉有子，果蠃負之). According to legend, the *guoluo* wasp would take *mingling* larvae to incubate as its own offspring while repeating, "Resemble me!" (*lei wo* 類我). After a period of time, the *mingling* larva would literally grow into a *guoluo* wasp. By the late imperial period, children adopted from outside the lineage were often referred to as "*mingling* children" (*mingling zi* 螟蛉子)—a term that encompassed the view that nurture could triumph over nature when raising an adopted child as one's own.[333]

Research by anthropologists confirms the continued prevalence of adoption both within the lineage and across surname lines well into the twentieth century. During his fieldwork with the powerful Man lineage in the New Territories, Hong Kong from 1969-1970, James Watson found 88 adoptions from within the Man lineage recorded in the lineage genealogy. He also found evidence of 14 adoptions from outside the lineage and surname group. Watson argues that one reason people adopted outside the lineage was to ensure a full break with the adopted son's biological family, thereby avoiding intra-lineage rivalries and ensuring the undivided loyalty of the adopted son.[334]

It was in this context that local families often sought to adopt children from CCF orphanages in South China. In a form letter sent to American sponsors in the event their child was adopted in China, the CCF explained, "Oftentimes relatives, now able to move about with

[333] On adoption in late imperial China, see Ann Waltner, *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990). By the Song Dynasty, an authority no less than Zhu Xi conceded that cross-surname adoption for the purpose of securing an heir was acceptable so long as the adopted son had "a totally sincere attitude of respect and filial piety" when performing the ancestral sacrifices. McMullen, 141.

[334] James L. Watson, "Agnates and Outsiders: Adoption in a Chinese Lineage," *Man* Vol. 10, No. 2 (1975), 293-306.

more freedom, find little kinfolk unexpectedly safe with us and, with true Chinese family loyalty, assume their responsibility. Then there is always the quota of legal adoption."[335] The records of CCF-supported orphanages in South China are peppered with examples of "good" local families adopting children by paying back a portion of the funds the CCF expended in raising them.[336] For example, in March 1948 the Board of Directors of the CCF's Happy Children's Home in Hong Kong approved the adoption of a seven-year-old boy named Guo by a family named Chen that agreed to reimburse the institution for a year of his living expenses.[337] The records of departures from the Morning Star Orphanage in Guangzhou likewise regularly list children as "taken for adoption by good family" or "adopted by Chinese family."[338] Oftentimes, the CCF facilitated adoptions to local people explicitly seeking to adopt a boy for the traditional purpose of securing a male heir. In June 1949, a family surnamed Huang approached the CCF office in Guangzhou about adopting an heir (*sizi* 嗣子). The CCF office in turn wrote to the Morning Star orphanage asking them to select an orphan "without any relatives" so that the two sides could meet and determine whether they were amenable to an adoption.[339]

In other cases, the CCF coordinated adoptions across national boundaries through overseas Chinese family networks spanning South China, Southeast Asia, and the United States. Many of the CCF's South China orphanages were filled with the children of overseas Chinese

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[335] Form Letter, Kiu Kong Orphanage Folder, *CCF*.

[336] "I have some interesting news for you—news about your little adoptee," Kiu Kong Orphanage Folder, *CCF*.

[337] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui jidujiao fu you gu'er yuan dongshi huiyi jilu"美華兒童福利會基督教福幼孤兒院董事會議記錄 [China's Children Fund Christian Happy Children's Home Board of Directors Meeting Minutes], March 2, 1948, 17-1-115-134, *GMA*.

[338] "Records of Departures and Substitutes from Morning Star Orphanage," Morning Star Orphanage 1948 Folder, *CCF*.

[339] "Zhi tongguang yuan Wu Xuchuan jianhan" 致童光院伍旭川箋函 [Letter to Wu Xuchuan of Morning Star Orphanage], June 27, 1949, 零 18-44, *GMA*.

migrants whose transnational families had been torn asunder by the Pacific War. After the Japanese surrender, as people sought to reconstruct families after years of war, some children in CCF orphanages were found and adopted by relatives who had survived the war overseas. In January 1947 the CCF-supported En Kwang School in Kunming reported the departure of nine children, seven of whom had been adopted by relatives living in Burma.[340] In August 1947, a boy named Tak Wa at the Morning Star Orphanage in Guangzhou was adopted by an uncle from Singapore.[341] In another case, a woman requested to adopt her nephew, Yanhua, from the Kiu Kong Orphanage. She explained that Yanhua's older male cousin had gone to America and been very successful in business, and she planed to send Yanhua to the United States to work with his cousin. She was permitted to adopt him after agreeing to pay 500 Hong Kong dollars as reimbursement for his living and educational expenses. The records do not indicate whether he ever made it to America.[342]

In some cases, the CCF even permitted children to be adopted by overseas Chinese to whom they were not related. In February 1948, a Taishanese man named Shurong, who was working as a merchant in the United States, and his wife, who was living with her son-in-law in Guangzhou, asked the CCF to adopt a two-year-old boy "to carry on the family line as heir" (*yi ji hou si* 以繼後嗣). The CCF agreed to the adoption on the condition that the boy would be raised as a Christian and educated in Christian schools.[343] Combining the Chinese tradition of adopting

[340] Letter from Pearl C.Y. Hsu to Erwin Raetz, January 26, 1947, Kiu Kong Orphanage Folder, *CCF*.

[341] "Report of Children's Form Orphanage and Substitutes, Morning Star, Canton," Morning Star Orphanage 1948 Folder, *CCF*.

[342] "Zhi qiaoquang yuan gonghan" 致僑光院公函 [Official Letter to the Kiu Kong Orphanage], February 16, 1949, 零 18-44-11, *GMA*.

[343] "Baozheng shu" 保證書 [Letter of Guarantee] , February 25, 1948, 17-1-115, 6, *GMA*.

boys as heirs to continue the family line with the new American Christian practice of facilitating transnational adoptions in order to place children in Christian homes, the case symbolizes how the CCF served as a link between two very different historical eras of adoption in China.

From the Adoption Plan to International Adoption

During the 1950s, the CCF expanded its work to new locations such as Japan and Korea, where it also played a crucial role in developing the first systematic programs for legal international adoption. In recent years, scholars have increasingly trained their attention on the historical origins of international adoption in Japan and Korea. These works sometimes mention the adoption plan in passing as having helped popularize the idea of adopting Asian children in the United States. For example, Catherine Choy notes that sponsorship programs helped foster "desires for international adoption," and Arissa Oh likewise includes sponsorship programs as part of what she terms the "international adoption complex" in Korea.[344] Nevertheless, the CCF's central role in furnishing funds, facilities, personnel, and expertise to support the development of legal international adoption remains largely unknown.

Although the CCF promoted child sponsorship as a form of "virtual adoption," international child sponsorship and legal international adoption aimed to achieve very different philanthropic and political goals. As Sara Fieldston has argued, while international adoption aimed to transform the lives of individual children (and the American families that adopted them), child sponsorship programs had the "loftier" aim to "mold children, and, through them, to remake nations."[345] The CCF's publicity materials made clear that it's goal was to raise a

[344] Choy, 79-81; Oh, 204.

[345] Fieldston, 5-6.

generation of Asian children who would transform their home countries into Westernized, Christian democracies. For example, one CCF article employed the classic colonialist language of the "civilizing mission" in suggesting how the adoption plan could effect change in Japan:

> Unless a little child leads Japan to civilization she is forever doomed…If there could be planted in every Japanese child's heart the seed of kindness we would solve the problem. Yes, it is as simple as that. A religion of love could transform Japan. The children of Japan could be taught it. We would like to see a thousand China's Children Fund orphanages and schools established in Japan.[346]

Or as another CCF advertisement crudely put it: "America has conquered Japan physically. Now, with God's help, may we conquer her spiritually."[347] In a 1954 article for the *Korea Times*, the director of the CCF's Korea program, Ernest Nash, explained that "the making of good *Korean* citizens out of homeless orphans is the primary aim of the many thousands of Americans" who participate in the CCF's adoption plan in Korea. Therefore, although the adoption plan created a "very near approximation of parent-child relationships," Nash stated that the CCF's "generous contributors consider that the Korean children they wish to help had best be left in Korea, and not adopted into homes in America."[348]

Nevertheless, as the CCF expanded its operations in Japan and Korea, it became one of the leading organizations promoting legal international adoption as a solution to the particular "problem" posed by the sizeable populations of mixed-race children born to U.S. soldiers and local women. At first, the CCF had simply sought to incorporate these children into its adoption plan. In 1950, Verent Mills traveled to Japan, where he was impressed with the plight of these "GI babies"—as well as with their special claim on American help. A CCF article describing

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[346] "Armament and a Little Child," *China News*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Fall 1945), 4.

[347] "Printed By Request," *China News*, Vol. V., No. 1 (Spring 1947), 3.

[348] Ernest T. Nash, "From Orphan to Good Citizen," *The Korea Times*, April 12, 1954, Box IB9, Folder 2, *CCF*.

Mills' visit emphasized the importance of incorporating these children into the adoption plan for the future of U.S. relations with Japan:

> There is a feeling in Japan—the Japan we are so anxious to impress with our American Way of Life and with our justice and fairness—that the children have a claim on America. They did not ask to be born and deserted. CCF is perfectly willing to assume this responsibility, if the American public will support such a program.[349]

Before long, however, Mills and the CCF leadership became convinced that even if they were raised and educated in CCF institutions, these children faced bleak futures in Japan. Rather than blame the plight of GI babies on the American fathers who abandoned them (or the U.S. military policy of discouraging marriages with Japanese women that all but encouraged them to do so), the CCF placed the blame squarely on Japanese racism: "The Japanese have been taught that their race is unusual in that it is 'pure and unmixed for over 6,000 years'…so deeply ingrained is the legend that the mixed-blood child is unacceptable to the average Japanese."[350]

In this context, the CCF somewhat reluctantly embraced the idea of U.S. couples legally adopting "mixed-blood" children from Japan and Korea. Internally, Clarke acknowledged, "CCF will suffer losses in income when CCF children who are 'adopted' under our sponsorship plan are removed from our orphanages to be brought to the United States." Nevertheless, Clarke instructed the CCF offices in Korea and Japan to cooperate fully in facilitating international adoptions: "CCF cannot be selfish in this matter. I realize that the life of a Korean GI [baby] will not be easy and if his or her life will be better in America, then I would be an insincere person if I did anything to discourage legal adoptions."[351] Overcoming this initial reluctance, CCF leadership soon began publicly promoting the mass adoption of mixed-race children from Japan

[349] "GI Babies in Japan," *China News*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 1950-1951), 1-2.

[350] Janss, 45.

[351] Calvitt Clarke to Ernest Nash, May 7, 1956, Box IB9, Folder 2, *CCF*.

and Korea to the United States. In 1952 Verent Mills called for the "mass adoption of GI babies by American families, widely separated so as to avoid over-concentration in any one area."[352] Implicitly acknowledging that racism against mixed-race children might also become a problem in the United States, Clarke offered the alternative suggestion of shipping mixed-race children en masse to racially diverse areas like Hawaii or Puerto Rico: "There would be no racial problems in Hawaii. For that matter, there would be none in Puerto Rico either, but Puerto Rico is already overpopulated."[353]

In Japan, the CCF helped make the international adoption of mixed-race children possible through its financial support of Sawada Miki's Elizabeth Saunders Home. An heiress to the Mitsubishi fortune, Sawada Miki founded the Elizabeth Saunders Home in 1948 for the specific purpose of caring for Japan's "mixed-blood children" (*konketsuji* 混血児). Informed by a strong racial nationalism, Sawada actively sought to convince Japanese mothers to give their mixed-race children over to the orphanage. Once under her care, she helped arrange for many of the children to be adopted by American families. (Sawada did not permit Japanese families to adopt children from the home).[354] A very high percentage of the mixed-raced children in Japan who were adopted by American families during the 1950s came from the Elizabeth Saunders Home. As of 1957, an estimated 1,222 children from Japan had been adopted by Americans through special nonquota visas made available through the Refugee Relief Act of 1953.[355] According to

[352] Peter Kalischer, "Madame Butterfly's Children," *Collier's*, Sept. 20, 1952, 18. See also Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

[353] Quoted in Oh, 73.

[354] On Sawada Miki's Elizabeth Saunders home and racial nationalism in postwar Japan, see Kristin Roebuck, "Orphans by Design: 'Mixed-blood Children, Child Welfare, and Racial Nationalism in Postwar Japan," *Japanese Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2016), 191-212.

[355] Choy, 24.

Sawada, the Elizabeth Saunders Home alone had facilitated international adoptions for approximately 800 of these children.[356] Sawada was able to carry out her program for mixed-race children in large part due to the generous financial support of the CCF. The CCF began supporting the Elizabeth Saunders Home through the adoption plan in 1950, and for the next two decades it remained the home's most consistent source of financial support.[357] By 1953, the CCF was sponsoring 101 children at the Elizabeth Saunders Home, which it provided with a greater monthly allocation of funds than any of the other 18 orphanages it supported in Japan.[358] The CCF took considerable pride in its role in facilitating the mass removal of mixed-race children from Japan to the United States. In his 1961 book *Yankee Si!*, the CCF's Edmund Janss declared, "The mixed-blood child in Japan has been taken to the heart of America."[359]

However, it was in Korea where international adoption was first institutionalized on a large scale, and it was also in Korea where the CCF played the most active role in providing financial and logistical support to facilitate the adoption of mixed-race children by American families. In 1956 the CCF agreed to construct a special annex at its Seoul Choong Hyun Babies' Home to serve as a reception center for mixed-race children awaiting adoption into American homes.[360] Opened on June 29, 1956 as the Lemnitzer-Doughty-Clarke Wing of the Seoul Choong Hyun Babies' Home, by the fall of 1957, 44 children were residing in the reception

[356] William R. Burkhardt, "Institutional Barriers, Marginality, and Adaptation Among the American-Japanese Mixed Bloods in Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1983), 519.

[357] Robert A. Fish, "The Heiress and the Love Children: Sawada Miki and the Elizabeth Saunders Home for Mixed-Blood Orphans in Postwar Japan" (PhD Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 2002), 131.

[358] "Proposed Budget for 1953," Box IA1, Folder 11, *CCF*.

[359] Janss, 45.

[360] Nash to Clarke, May 7, 1956, Box IB9, Folder 2, *CCF*.

center as they awaited the processing of their adoptions.[361] The CCF went to great lengths to prepare these children for their journey to the United States:

> Here they are clothed as American children, eat an American diet, and are in all things trained in American ways of living. Their health is cared for by Western trained Korean nurses. Ladies of Seoul's international community volunteer their services to teach the children English and to play American games with them. Thus the children who pass through our CCF home are conditioned to be suited to the environment of the homes in America to which they are going, and the task of the adoptive parents is made that much the easier…[362]

In building and operating the reception center in Seoul, the CCF was also making a substantial financial commitment to facilitating international adoption. The CCF invested US $7,000 in the construction of the new wing.[363] Moreover, as children were generally removed from the sponsorship program once someone had committed to adopting them legally, the CCF estimated that it "would be out of pocket some US $4,000 to $5,000 annually" for the care of children in the reception center.[364]

Much like it had since its earliest days in China, the CCF received frequent letters from donors requesting to legally adopt the children they sponsored in Korea. By the mid-1950s, however, the CCF could actually help make the legal adoption of Korean children a reality. As the volume of requests grew (at one point Clarke estimated that the CCF received "a few requests" for adoptions every day), the CCF worked out standard procedures for handling serious inquiries into the adoption of specific children.[365] For example, in 1958 an American couple

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[361] "Annual Report of the Korea Office for the Year Ending July 31, 1957," Box IB9, Folder 9; "Director's Report Upon Activities of Korea Office," Box IB9, Folder 10; *CCF*.

[362] Nash to Clarke, Jan. 30, 1958, Box IB10, Folder 2, *CCF*.

[363] "Annual Report on Korea Operations (Year Ending July 1956)," Box IB9, Folder 4, *CCF*.

[364] Nash to Clarke, May 7, 1957, Box IB9, Folder 7, *CCF*.

[365] Oh, 229.

named the Kelloggs wrote to the CCF hoping to adopt a Korean girl named Chung Cha whom they had already sponsored for several years through the adoption plan. Nash quickly referred the request to Hong Oak Soon, the director of Child Placement Services in Seoul, who in turn sent the following reply back to the Kelloggs:

> Enclosed are "Application for Adoption" form and general information which is self-explanatory of our procedure in adoption process.
>
> While your home is being studied we will look into the condition of the child whether she is good enough for adoption and immigration and will let you know of it.[366]

Although the outcomes of such requests depended upon both home evaluations of prospective adopters as well as medical examinations of the children they hoped to adopt, by the late 1950s the CCF's adoption plan had become a common stepping stone to legal international adoption. As of July 1957, 69 children from the CCF's adoption plan in Korea had been legally adopted into American homes.[367]

Nevertheless, the adoption plan and legal international adoption did not always coexist so easily. One issue was that donors to the CCF's adoption plan often specifically requested to sponsor GI children, who were in increasingly short supply because so many were in the process of being legally adopted. As Clarke wrote in a letter to Nash, "This creates quite a problem because the sponsors are dissatisfied if the children assigned are not mixed-blood children."[368] In one extraordinary case, a woman from Washington, D.C. was startled to see a *Life* magazine story indicating that a boy named Kang Yong, the very boy she sponsored through the CCF's adoption plan, had been adopted into a home in the United States. A CCF investigation revealed

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[366] Nash to Hong, February 18, 1958; Hong to Kellogg, February 25, 1958, Box IB10, Folder 2, *CCF*.

[367] "Annual Report of the Korea Office for the Year Ending July 31, 1957."

[368] Clarke to Nash, September 13, 1956, Box IB9, Folder 3, *CCF*.

that because of a problem with the paperwork when the boy left his Korean orphanage, they had failed to inform his sponsor of his departure.[369]

The CCF's involvement in caring for children being processed for international adoption also caused it to become embroiled in a sharp controversy over "proxy" adoptions. Under the proxy method, U.S. citizens designated an agent to adopt a child on their behalf in a foreign court. Popular independent adoption organizations like the Holt Adoption Program and Pearl Buck's Welcome House favored the proxy method because it allowed for adoptions to be completed quickly and without the endorsement of a social service agency. The International Social Service ("ISS"), on the other hand, vehemently opposed proxy adoptions and argued that professional investigations into the backgrounds of the child and the prospective adoptive parents were necessary to ensure the best interests of the child were protected.[370] The CCF's stake in this debate was financial. The children in the CCF's reception center were being processed through the ISS, and the longer its background investigations stretched on, the longer the CCF had to support the children at its own expense. By early 1958, Nash was venting his frustration with the "financially painful" "stagnating" of children in the reception center. In a rare critique of excessive bureaucracy, Nash wrote that the ISS was making "a fetish of its own procedures at the expense of the primary objective and intent of the law." On behalf of the CCF, he began advocating for greater use of proxy adoptions within the Child Placement Service Committee organized by the Korean Ministry of Social Affairs.[371]

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[369] Nash to Clarke, Nov. 3, 1956, Box IB9, Folder 5, *CCF*.

[370] On the debates over proxy adoptions see Choy, 82-95; Oh, 95-131.

[371] Nash to Clarke, Jan. 14, 1958, Box IB10, Folder 2, *CCF*.

The CCF had helped build a vast bureaucracy capable of coordinating both the adoption plan and legal international adoption across East Asia on a mass scale. But as far as Nash was concerned, excessive adherence to bureaucratic procedure was beginning to hinder, rather than facilitate, the formation of transnational intimate relationships between Americans and Asian children as a form of humanitarian rescue.

Conclusion

In the short span of a decade, from the end of WWII to the mid-1950s, the CCF helped transform both the adoption plan and legal international adoption into central features of global humanitarianism in East Asia. They accomplished this feat by linking the adoption of Asian children to the ideological projects of spreading Christianity and American influence in East Asia—and building a vast, transnational bureaucracy capable of facilitating these adoptive relationships on a large scale. The moment in which the adoption plan could be advertised unabashedly as a tool of American influence in China, however, was short-lived. Only four years after the end of WWII, the Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949 called the entire global humanitarian project in China into question. But rather than dismiss the adoption plan as a tool of the American imperialists, the new Chinese Communist authorities instead sought to transform it into a new mode of "people's diplomacy" that could secure ideological and material support for the Chinese Communist revolution abroad. In the new People's Republic of China, the practices of global intimacy developed by the NARC and the CCF would be put to use in the service of a very different ideological project.

CHAPTER III

Adopting Revolution: The Chinese Communist Revolution and the Politics of Global Humanitarianism

On July 1, 1949, a Chinese girl named Yin-ho, who lived and studied at the Yu Tsai School in the northern suburbs of Shanghai, wrote her monthly letter to her American foster mother, Esther, a high school teacher in Worcester County, Massachusetts. Her letter begins:

> Dear Foster Mother:
>
> It is too bad that we cannot open our mouths and speak to each other directly but can only use this piece of white paper to say all that is in our hearts. But this piece of paper is too small for me to say everything. Would you like to hear more? Let me tell you![372]

Esther paid all of Yin-ho's expenses at the Yu Tsai School through the China Branch of an international child welfare organization called Foster Parents Plan for War Children (*zhanzai ertong yiyanghui zhongguo fenhui* 戰災兒童義養會中國分會; "PLAN China Branch"). Opened in 1947, the PLAN China Branch followed the example of the National Association for Refugee Children and China's Children Fund in utilizing the adoption plan to fundraise for child welfare institutions across China. However, while the PLAN China Branch's fundraising strategy was similar to these other transnational child welfare organizations, its political orientation was radically different.

As it turns out, what Yin-ho wanted to share with her foster mother that day in July 1949 were all the positive changes she had observed since the People's Liberation Army had liberated Shanghai one month earlier. Her letter continues:

> It has been one month since the liberation of Shanghai and we can see that things have changed. For example, in the past nothing was ever given to the people in the villages,

[372] Letter by Yin-ho, July 1, 1949, Box 114, Folder 82, *FPP*.

> but now they are given fertilizer and the poorer farmers also get rice. Also the soldiers are never seen bullying the people.

Her letter is also full of seething anger at the American-allied Nationalist Party, whose bombing of Shanghai had recently destroyed her classmate's home:

> There is something else I want to tell you. It's that the day before yesterday the Nationalists sent planes to come and drop bombs. They came in the morning as soon as it was light and dropped 16 bombs in one place until the whole area was a tragic sight. We have a classmate whose home was bombed. Luckily no one in the family was killed, but everything was destroyed. The planes did not leave until the afternoon. It was truly terrible!

Yin-ho's letter was one of thousands that Chinese children sent to their American foster parents through the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan in the years surrounding the Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949. Unlike almost any other source available to the American public at the time, these letters offered a child's eye view of the revolution as it unfolded in real time. For Yin-ho, the revolution meant the arrival of kind Communist soldiers who gave fertilizer and extra rice to farmers in her neighborhood. It also meant that she and her classmates lived in constant fear of Nationalist air raids that were laying waste to large residential areas of Shanghai with planes supplied by the United States. In many regards, Yin-ho's letter was strikingly similar to those that children had written through the NARC's adoption program during WWII, describing their harrowing experiences of Japanese air raids and praising the Nationalists for rescuing them. In the summer of 1949, however, it was the American-allied Nationalist Party that was conducting the air raids, and the liberators whom Yin-ho described in such a favorable light were the Chinese Communists.

This chapter traces how the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan became a centerpiece of efforts to transform humanitarian practices inherited from the Republican period to meet the new ideological and material needs of the Chinese Communist Revolution. Under the rubric of

"people's diplomacy," the PLAN China Branch channeled funding to "progressive" child welfare institutions while encouraging children to write their foster parents about how they had suffered under the American-allied Nationalist regime and were now thriving under the Communists. The PLAN China Branch coordinated with the highest rungs of Chinese Communist leadership, but responsibility for carrying out its experiment in revolutionary humanitarianism ultimately lay in the hands of the Chinese foster children and their local caretakers, who were suddenly thrust into the role of "people's diplomats." The Korean War forced the PLAN China Branch to shutter its adoption plan at the end of 1950, but the humanitarian networks and strategies it mobilized persisted to play important roles in mediating China's relationship with the world throughout the Mao period.

Between Two Worlds: The Founding of the PLAN China Branch

The PLAN China Branch was founded in September 1947 as a unique partnership between two humanitarian organizations—the U.S.-based Foster Parents Plan for War Children ("PLAN") and the China-based China Welfare Fund (*Zhongguo fuli jijinhui* 中國福利基金會; "CWF"). While PLAN and the CWF had very different histories, they shared the view that officially non-political humanitarian work could serve as a useful means through which to advance leftist political causes. This shared approach to managing the combustible mixture of humanitarianism and politics laid the foundation for the two organizations to collaborate on a bold experiment to reshape the politics of humanitarianism in the context of the Chinese Communist Revolution.

Founded by English journalist John Langdon-Davies in April 1937 as the Foster Parents Scheme for Children in Spain, PLAN initially worked to support hostels for refugee children

fleeing the fighting of the Spanish Civil War.[373] PLAN's founders strongly supported the Republicans against General Franco and the Nationalists, and they intended their work to bolster the Republican cause. Nevertheless, they believed that framing PLAN appeals in strictly humanitarian terms would best serve its political aims. The PLAN Board of Directors frankly acknowledged as much in its first official meeting on March 24, 1938: "although this Committee is created to aid the Loyalists…appeals to the public will be humanitarian, exclusively concerned with refugee children."[374] PLAN was chartered as an independent corporation in New York on July 13, 1939, and during the course of WWII it gradually expanded its activities to support children rendered homeless by war across Europe. After the conclusion of the war, PLAN further expanded to open programs in Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and China.[375] When called upon to justify its continued work in China after the Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949, PLAN explained to donors that its "purely humanitarian" character required that it not discriminate against children in Communist countries for political reasons.[376]

In much the same way that PLAN deployed humanitarian aid to support the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, the CWF used its public commitment to politically neutral humanitarianism to justify providing aid to the Chinese Communist Party during the War of

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[373] Henry D. Molumphy, *For Common Decency: The History of Foster Parents Plan, 1937-1983* (Warwick: Foster Parents Plan International, 1984), 2.

[374] Molumphy, 17.

[375] Molumphy, 4-7.

[376] Molumphy, 104-105. It was not until the mid-1950s, in the increasingly polarized political climate of the high Cold War, that PLAN was forced to abandon its commitment to political neutrality and publicly align itself with anti-communist causes.[376] In 1954 the FPP was investigated by Greek intelligence officials for supporting the children of communist rebels in the Greek Civil War. Under intense pressure to show it was not "helping Communists," the FPP began to tout how its programs had aided anti-communist causes in publicity materials. See Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 88-90.

Resistance Against Japan and the Chinese Civil War. Song Qingling—better known in the West as Madame Sun Yatsen, widow of the Chinese revolutionary hero—founded the CWF as the China Defense League (*baowei zhongguo tongmeng* 保衛中國同盟) in Hong Kong in June 1938 to raise money and medical supplies abroad for wartime relief work in China.[377] While the CWF was officially neutral regarding conflicts between the Communists and Nationalists—who were then engaged in an uneasy alliance against Japan—it focused on directing aid to Communist-controlled guerilla areas. Song explained this logic in an open letter dated September 18, 1943:

> The reason we place our focus on the guerrilla areas is because although they have and continue to tie down nearly half of Japan's military forces in China, yet for three years they have not received any military or financial assistance—or any of the medical assistance with which our work is particularly concerned. The domestic political blockade has made it so that they do not have doctors, surgical equipment or medicine, and they cannot even receive those sent by friends abroad. We do not demand that they be given preferential treatment, but we demand that they be given equal treatment.[378]

Since most aid provided to China during WWII was given to the Nationalists, the CWF argued that the principle of humanitarian neutrality demanded that they rebalance the scales by focusing their own work on Communist-controlled areas. It was not until the liberation of Shanghai in

[377] The China Welfare Fund has gone by three different names, corresponding to three different stages in its institutional history. From its founding on June 14, 1938 until the end of WWII it was known as the China Defense League (保衛中國同盟). After relocating to Shanghai in November 1945, it was renamed the China Welfare Fund (中國福利基金會) and expanded its work to focus on providing for war orphans and other impoverished children as well as establishing model medical facilities. On August 15, 1950, as part of a broader reorganization, it was again renamed the China Welfare Institute (中國福利會) to reflect its shift away from fundraising for relief work to providing a range of child welfare services on a permanent basis. For clarity and simplicity, I will use the name China Welfare Fund (CWF) throughout this chapter. See "Zhongguo fuli hui jianshi 中國福利會監視" [Brief History of China Welfare Institute], SMA: C45-1-25-1, *SMA*. On the history of the China Welfare Fund, Xu Fenghua 徐鋒華 Xu, *Shenfen, zuzhi yu zhengzhi: Song Qingling he baomeng—zhongfuhui yanjiu (1938-1958)* 身份、組織與政治：宋慶齡和保盟——中福會研究 [Identity, Organization, and Politics: Song Qingling and the China Defense League—China Welfare Institute (1938-1958)] (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian chubanshe, 2013).

[378] "Gei zhongguo zai haiwai de pengyoumen de gongkai xin 給中國在海外的朋友們的公開" [An Open Letter to China's Friends Overseas], *Song Qingling xuanji shang juan* [Selected Works of Song Qingling] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), 377.

May 1949 that the CWF abandoned its commitment to political neutrality and threw its support openly behind the Chinese Communist Party.[379]

The improbable partnership between these two geographically disparate humanitarian organizations was facilitated by an American named Gerald Tannebaum. Born in Baltimore in 1916, Tannebaum moved to Shanghai in the fall of 1945 to serve as the deputy director of an Armed Forces radio station.[380] He quickly befriended Song Qingling, and it was during a dinner at Song's home with future premier of China Zhou Enlai that the two Chinese leaders persuaded Tannebaum to remain in China to work for the CWF. "To help Madame Sun Yatsen is to help the Chinese revolution," Tannebaum recalled Zhou telling him. Tannebaum agreed, and on July 1, 1946 he began work as the CWF's general secretary.[381] On a brief visit to New York in 1947, Tannebaum met PLAN's executive chairman Edna Blue, who hired him to help PLAN expand into China.[382] Tannebaum opened the PLAN China Branch in Shanghai in September 1947 as a department within the CWF.[383] He would personally serve as director of the PLAN China Branch while also continuing his duties as the CWF's general secretary. In addition to

[379] Xu, 86-90.

[380] Bart Barnes, "6 Months in China Ended at 26 Years: Baltimorean's 26-Year Stay in China Ended," *Washington Post*, Nov. 11, 1974, C1.

[381] "Tanningbang tan zhongguo fuli jijin hui 譚寧邦談中國福利基金會" [Tannebaum Discusses the China Welfare Fund], in Gu Linmin 顧琳敏 [ed.], *Wangshi huimou: zhongguo fuli hui shizhi ziliao huicui* 往事回眸：中國福利會史志資料薈萃 [Glancing Back Upon the Past: Selected Historical Records of the China Welfare Institute] (Shanghai: Zhongguo Fulihui Chubanshe, 2011), 260-261.

[382] "Staff History," Box 115, Folder 88, *FPP*.

[383] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo: zhanzai ertong yiyanghui zhongguo fenhui gongzuo baogao* 為苦難兒童而工作: 戰災兒童義養會中國分會工作報告 [Work for the Suffering Children: Foster Parents' Plan for War Children China Branch Work Report]. (Shanghai: Zhanzai ertong yiyanghui zhongguo fenhui, 1949), 10.

Tannebaum, the PLAN China Branch hired nine additional staff members, all of whom were Chinese.[384]

This partnership between Gerald Tannebaum and Song Qingling was briefly the subject of gossip that scandalized readers across the world. On December 8, 1947, Drew Pearson's infamous syndicated column, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," claimed that Tannebaum and Song were engaged in a secret romantic relationship—what Pearson called "the greatest love story since King Edward VIII of England gave up the throne of England to marry Wally Simpson." The idea that Sun Yatsen's widow—"the Martha Washington of modern China"—had fallen in love with an American soldier 23 years her junior was so appalling, Pearson claimed, that their relationship had been "fearfully hushed up by the Chinese government." Nevertheless, when Tannebaum was discharged from the Army, Song Qingling took the "daring step" of hiring him at the CWF so that he could remain with her in Shanghai.[385] Covered in newspapers from Los Angeles to Shanghai to Mumbai, the story was lambasted as a baseless rumor by Tannebaum's family and by Song Qingling herself.[386] To be sure, the reports of Song Qingling's romance with Tannebaum were but the latest in a decades-long string of blatantly sexist attempts to undermine her moral stature in light of her persistent criticism of the Nationalist Party.[387] Regardless of their personal relationship, Gerald Tannebaum and Song

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[384] "China: Program Review (1949)," Box 114, Folder 81, *FPP*. The PLAN China's Branch divided the work of its staff into seven sections (組): inspection, accounting, education, translation, medical, shipping management, and general affairs. *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 36.

[385] Drew Pearson, "Chinese Hush Romance Rumors," Dec. 8, 1947, *Washington Post*, B19; "Mme. Sun Yat-sen's Romance," Dec. 9, 1947, *Times of India*, 3.

[386] "Madame Sun Denies Report of Romance," Dec. 10, 1947, *Los Angeles Times*, 1; "Mei jizhe hunao—sun furen yaoqiu piersen zidong gengzheng 美記者胡鬧孫夫人要求皮爾森自動更正" [American Journalist Spews Nonsense—Madame Sun Demands that Pearson Correct the Record], *Ta Kung Wan Pao*, 1.

[387] On the other hand, historians' attempts to refute such rumors are perhaps equally sexist in continuing to link her moral standing to her status as Sun Yatsen's "chaste widow." See, for example, Zheng Peiyan, "1947 nian song

Qingling's shared humanitarian and political commitments would underpin a highly productive professional partnership that lasted for decades.

By the time of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, the PLAN China Branch had become a critical humanitarian organization relied upon by dozens of child welfare institutions and thousands of children across China. PLAN advertisements in major American newspapers invited readers to become "foster parents" for US $180 per year, payable in $15 monthly installments.[388] As of 1949, PLAN foster parents had "adopted" 617 Chinese foster children who resided in 27 child welfare institutions throughout China.[389] The PLAN China Branch did not provide cash grants directly to children but rather allocated money to each institution on a monthly basis.[390] As PLAN-supported child welfare institutions used the funds for general expenses like food, clothing, and medicine that benefited all children at the institution and not only those in the adoption plan, the PLAN China Branch estimated that approximately 6,000 children benefited from its support.[391] In 1949 alone, the PLAN China Branch received donations totaling US $65,516.25 as well as relief supplies valued at US $5,813.21.[392]

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qingling zao e'yi feibang 1947 年宋慶齡遭惡意誹謗" [In 1947 Song Qingling Encountered Malicious Slander], *Shiji* 世紀 [Century], No. 6 (2013), 14-17.

[388] See for example, "Eyes that Trust, Plead, and Accuse," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1947, 35.

[389] "China: Program Review (1949)," Box 114, Folder 81, *FPP*.

[390] Initially the PLAN China Branch provided institutions with a monthly allotment of US $10 per foster child, but the allotment was reduced to US $7 in September 1949 in order to accommodate more children and in view of stabilizing commodity prices. "China: Program Review (1949)," Box 114, Folder 81, *FPP*.

[391] Apart from the cost of adopting a foster child, many foster parents sent additional cash gifts to their foster children for birthdays and holidays. These gifts were given directly to the individual children, although they were encouraged to share with classmates or spend the money in ways that benefited the entire institution. "China: Program Review (1949)," Box 114, Folder 81, *FPP*; "Zhan zai ertong yiyang hui zhongguo fenhui yi jiu si jiu nian nianbao 戰災兒童義養會中國分會一九四九年年報 [Foster Parents' Plan for War Children China Branch 1949 Annual Report] , C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[392] "China: Program Review (1949)," Box 114, Folder 81, *FPP*.

Only two years after the founding of the PLAN China Branch, the Chinese Communist Revolution rendered the future of all humanitarian activity in China uncertain. In this period of flux and instability, the PLAN China Branch's status as part of two larger humanitarian organizations—one American, one Chinese—would provide both opportunities and liabilities as it sought to navigate the seismic shifts in local and global politics wrought by the revolution.

The Rise of Revolutionary Humanitarianism

After weeks of fierce fighting, on May 27, 1949 the People's Liberation Army pronounced the city of Shanghai liberated. For the PLAN China Branch—as for the rest of China's largest, wealthiest, and most cosmopolitan city—the revolution had arrived. In the ensuing months, the PLAN China Branch sought and received approval of its work from the highest ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. In July 1949 Tannebaum traveled to Beijing to meet with high-level Chinese Communist officials about the future of both the CWF in general and the PLAN China Branch in particular. While in Beijing, he managed to secure a meeting with Dong Biwu, who would soon become vice premier of the People's Republic of China, and his old acquaintance Zhou Enlai. While Zhou and Dong informed Tannebaum that it was too early to determine the long-term future of the CWF, they instructed him that it should continue all of its current work and even "increase its work if not limited by manpower and financial resources."[393] Tannebaum also met with personnel from the foreign affairs office (*waishi ju* 外事局) to discuss "the overall situation of organizations from different countries conducting relief

[393] "Zhongguo fuli jijin hui 1949 nian zongganshi nianbao 中國福利基金會 1949 年總幹事年報" [China Welfare Fund 1949 Annual Report of the Secretary-General], C45-1-2-1, *SMA*.

work in China."[394] As of the summer of 1949, the PLAN China Branch had secured explicit but temporary approval from the highest echelons of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Chinese Communist government allowed humanitarian organizations like the PLAN China Branch to continue operating without a determination on their long-term futures until April 1950, when it convened the Chinese People's Relief Congress (*zhongguo renmin jiuji daibiao huiyi* 中國人民救濟代表會議) in Beijing to establish official policy toward social welfare and relief work.[395] A standing committee highlighted by Vice Premier Dong Biwu, Minister of Health Li Dequan, and Song Qingling presided over the meeting.[396] Tannebaum also attended in his capacity as general secretary of the CWF and director of the PLAN China Branch.[397] The Congress established the People's Relief Administration of China (*Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui* 中國人民救濟總會; "PRAC") to coordinate and supervise social welfare and philanthropic activities nationwide.[398] Among the meeting's most passionately debated

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[394] "Zhongguo fuli jijin hui guanyu tanningbang zongganshi lü ping de bagao 中國福利基金會關於譚寧邦總幹事旅平的報告" [China Welfare Fund Report Regarding Secretary-General Tannebaum's Trip to Beiping] C45-1-2-5, *SMA*.

[395] On policy regarding private charities in the early People's Republic of China, see Li Xiaowei 李小尉, "Yi Jiu Si Jiu Nian Zhi Yi Jiu Wu Liu Nian Guojia Zhengquan Yu Minjian Cishan Zuzhi de Guanxi Jiexi 一九四九年至一九五六年國家政權與民間慈善組織的關係解析 [Analysis of the Relationship Between State Power and Non-governmental Charity Organizations in 1949-1956]," *Zhong Gong Dangshi Yanjiu* 中共黨史研究 [Chinese Communist Party History Studies], No. 9 (2012), 66-73. On the gradual demise of private charities over the course of the New Democracy period (1949-1953), see Nara Dillon, "New Democracy and the Demise of Private Charity in Shanghai," in Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz (ed.), *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 80-102.

[396] "Zhongguo renmin jiuji daibiao huiyi kaimu 中國人民救濟代表會議開幕" [The Chinese People's Relief Congress Opens], April 26, 1950, *Renmin ribao.*

[397] "Minutes of the Third Meeting for the Year of 1950 of the Corporation of Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, Inc.," November 2, 1950, Box 1, Folder 5, *FPP*.

[398] "Zai Zhongguo renmin jiuji daibiao da huiyishang: song qingling zhi bimu ci 在中國人民救濟代表大會議上：宋慶齡致閉幕詞" [Song Qingling's Closing Remarks before the Chinese People's Relief Congress], May 5, 1950, *Renmin ribao*; "Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui zhangcheng 中國人民救濟總會章程" [Chinese People's Relief Administration By-Laws], May 5, 1950, *Renmin ribao*. For an account of the founding and early history of the People's Relief Administration of China see Wen Jian, "Xin zhongguo chengli chuqi zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui

topics was whether to continue accepting humanitarian aid from countries like the United States now considered among China's foremost enemies.

Speaking on the Congress's second day, Song Qingling articulated a vision for a new model of humanitarianism that would meet China's pressing social welfare needs while fostering ties with progressive forces around the world. Later published in the *People's Daily*, Song's speech stands out as among the most influential public testimonials for how global humanitarianism could serve the Chinese Communist Revolution.[399] She began by emphasizing how the CWF's global humanitarian activities had contributed to the Communists' victory in the civil war, singling out the PLAN China Branch for particular praise: "Before liberation, the recipients of PLAN aid were progressive or potentially progressive organizations. At that time, these schools and children's institutions had very few other sources of funding. Through PLAN's help, they were able to survive this extremely difficult time."[400]

Song acknowledged and echoed the Congress's widespread criticism of "imperialist" humanitarian organizations that "use the issue of relief aid as an artifice for attacking new China." Nevertheless, she did not call for ending all Western philanthropy in China. Rather, Song called for using the transnational connections forged through humanitarianism to "transform foreign people's opinions" of China. In contrast to "formal government and news reports," global humanitarianism could better accomplish this goal by building "people-to-people relationships,"

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yanjiu 新中國成立初期中國人民救濟總會研究" [Research on the People's Relief Administration of China in the Early Days of New China] (Master's Thesis: Hebei Normal University, 2012).

[399] "Zhongguo fuli jijin hui gongzuo de baoga—yi jiu wu ling nian si yue er shi wu ri zai zhongguo renmin jiuji daibiao huiyi shang 中國福利基金會工作的報告——一九五〇年四月二十五日在中國人民救濟代表會議上" [The China Welfare Fund Work Report—April 25, 1950 at the Chinese People's Relief Congress], May 7, 1950, *Renmin Ribao.*

[400] "Zhongguo fuli jijin hui gongzou de baogao 中國福利基金會工作的報告" [China Welfare Fund Work Report] April 25, 1950, *Song qingling xuanji shang juan*, 523.

which Song argued were "more easily embraced by the people of imperialist countries." The PLAN China Branch's adoption plan, which sought to foster intimate ties between Americans and Chinese children, was the ideal vehicle for this new model of humanitarian aid. In citing the continued importance of its work "in accordance with the policies of the People's Government," Song trained a national spotlight on the PLAN China Branch as a model humanitarian organization for the Communist era.[401]

Song's address to the Chinese People's Relief Congress was well received. She wrote to Zhou Enlai afterward, "The Congress unanimously praised the China Welfare Fund's past work…Therefore, we will continue with our previous work projects and should plan to strengthen their development so that they can serve as models for the entire country."[402] Song's selection as the first chairman of the PRAC further affirmed her vision for China's continued involvement in global humanitarian activities.[403] In effect, her performance at the People's Relief Congress had green-lighted a bold experiment in revolutionary humanitarianism—an experiment to be spearheaded by the PLAN China Branch and the children under its care.

Maintaining a clear line of demarcation between "revolutionary" and "imperialist" humanitarianism was far from easy. While the Congress was still in session, Song received news that PLAN headquarters in New York intended to work with other more conservative relief agencies including United Service to China and Church World Service to secure U.S.

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[401] "Zhongguo fuli jijin hui gongzuo de baogao," 524-527.

[402] "Zhi Zhou Enlai 致周恩來[Letter to Zhou Enlai]," May 25, 1950, *Song Qingling Shuxin Ji* 宋慶齡書信集 [Collected Letters of Song Qingling] (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe, 1999), 275-278.

[403] "Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui zhi jian weiyuanhui juxing huiyi 中國人民救濟總會執監委會舉行會議 [The Chinese People's Relief Administration Executive and Supervisory Committees Hold a Meeting] May 6, 1950, *Renmin Ribao.*

Government aid for famine areas in China.[404] Blindsided, she immediately cabled executive chairman Edna Blue to demand that she cut off all relations with those other relief groups. On April 26, 1950—only one day after her speech to the Chinese People's Relief Congress—Song wrote to the PLAN China Branch's deputy secretary-general Zhang Zong'an to express her hope that "Mrs. Blue did not understand the political significance of her agreement." "If this is not the case," she added ominously, "then I feel the time has come to tell Foster Parents Plan for War Children that we do not want their help anymore."[405] The episode quickly blew over, and the PLAN China Branch continued its work uninterrupted. Nevertheless, the wide gulf between Song's public assurances and private doubts foreshadowed the delicate tightrope act that she and the PLAN China Branch would have to maintain in pursuing their global humanitarian agenda in the context of surging Chinese nationalism and the quickly descending global Cold War.

The Adoption Plan as "People's Diplomacy"

The sheer volume of correspondence between Chinese children and their foreign foster parents marks the adoption plan as a highly significant avenue of communication between ordinary Chinese and Americans at a moment when the two nations were fast becoming enemies on opposite sides of a global Cold War. As stated in the PLAN China Branch bylaws, all children in the adoption program were required to write one letter to their foster parents every month. If a child failed to write for two or more consecutive months without a valid excuse, the PLAN China Branch would consider terminating their financial assistance through the

[404] "U.S. Helps Looms in China for Private Relief Groups," April 24, 1950, *Christian Science Monitor*.

[405] "Zhi Zhang Zongan 致張宗安" [Letter to Zhang Zongan], *Song qingling shuxin ji*, 266-267.

program.[406] In the year and a half between January 1949 and July 1950—the crucial period surrounding the Chinese Communist Revolution—Chinese children wrote 6,385 letters to their foster parents as part of the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan. During that same period, American foster parents sent 1,437 letters to their Chinese foster children. These numbers would be even greater if not for disruptions to China's domestic and international postal services in 1949 due to the civil war.[407] In July 1948 the *Ta Gung Pao* had reported that some American foster mothers would send their Chinese children four or five letters in a single month.[408]

The PLAN China Branch sought to utilize this voluminous correspondence to win support for the Chinese Communist Revolution abroad—a strategy it termed "people's diplomacy" (*renmin waijiao* 人民外交). In its 1949 annual report, the PLAN China Branch argued that by providing an intimate view into how children's lives had improved under Communist rule, children's letters were winning friends for the Chinese revolution within American society:

> Before liberation, the content of the children's letters reflected the bleakness and corruption of the reactionary Nationalist regime and their collusion with the American government. On the other hand, since liberation the children's letters have instead reflected the excellent discipline of the People's Liberation Army and the new People's Government as well as the children's own progress. Their letters have made some PLAN donors believe that China is a country with a bright future and that the Chinese Communist Party isn't what the American media makes it out to be.[409]

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[406] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 32-34. In addition to monthly letters, children were further required to write a thank you letter whenever they received a gift from their foster parents.

[407] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*; Zhan zai ertong yiyang hui zhongguo fenhui 1950 nian shang ban nian gongzuo zongjie 戰災兒童義養會中國分會 1950 年上半年工作總結 [Foster Parents' Plan for War Children China Branch Work Summary for the First Half of 1950], C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

[408] "Zhengjiu beifang gu'er sun furen paiyuan lai ping shicha xiezhu xun ren waiji de fumu 拯救北方孤兒孫夫人派員來平視察協助尋認外籍外籍的父母" [Rescuing Orphans in the North: Madame Sun Yatsen Sends Staff Member to Beiping to Conduct Inspections, Help Search for Foreign Foster Parents], July 12, 1948, *Ta Gung Pao* (Tianjin Edition), 3.

[409] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

The PLAN China Branch did not claim that it could turn large swaths of American society in favor of the Communist Party. Instead, the report deployed anecdotal examples of children's letters influencing their foster parents to suggest the effect such programs might have if carried out on a large scale:

> There is one donor who has adopted a student at the Yu Tsai School who works for an American radio station. He read a letter written to him by the student he sponsors out loud over American airwaves. This is exactly what we're hoping for.[410]

One letter at a time, children could reveal to their sponsors a different side of the Chinese Communist revolution from what they read in the newspapers.

In order for children's letters to function effectively as "people's diplomacy," the PLAN China Branch issued prescriptions regarding both the content and structure of their letters. In November 1949 the PLAN China Branch published a book called *Work for the Suffering Children* (*Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo* 為苦難兒童而工作) that posed the issue succinctly: "How can we take the exchange of ordinary pleasantries and dull greetings and transform them into people's diplomacy and international propaganda?" To achieve this goal, the book suggested potential topics for children's letters: "the construction of new China, the glorious achievements of the People's Liberation Army, the contrast between the People's Government and the government of the Nationalist reactionaries—all of these can serve as subjects for the children to report on."[411] In a 1950 internal report, the PLAN China Branch outlined three stages through which children's letters could progress as they continued to write their foster parents each month:

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[410] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[411] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 15.

> Stage one: Report stories from their institutions after liberation or the conditions of living in their villages since liberation.
>
> Stage two: Recount the glorious achievements of the people's government, such as stabilizing commodity prices and self-help through production.
>
> Stage three: Discuss the international situation, such as the peace signature movement and the Korea issue.[412]

The PLAN China Branch even went so far as to suggest specific narrative strategies suited to the particularities of the American psyche:

> Generally speaking, the majority of Americans' political level is low, but they are relatively inclined to seek out facts. For this reason, they will not easily accept empty sayings and slogans and on the contrary will feel an aversion to them. On the other hand, they are willing to accept narrative stories and specific facts and examples…We think that the people who lead children in writing letters should grasp hold of this type of propaganda and reporting.[413]

Through both personal stories and concrete details, children's letters could influence Americans' perception of China better than the dogmatic slogans of government propaganda.

Figure 3.1. *Work for the Suffering Children: Foster Parents Plan for War Children China Branch Work Report* (Zhanzai Yiyanghui Zhongguo Fenhui, 1949). This book was published in November 1949 to explain the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan to domestic audiences.

[412] C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

[413] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 16.

The PLAN China Branch maintained close communication with PLAN headquarters in New York in an effort to maintain its support for their work in Communist China. One report back to PLAN headquarters read:

> In relation to the "liberation" of China, the implementation of FPP program has been put in so advantageous a position that…FPP's work is no longer limited by political geography and because of the tremendous influence of the new era all the institutions begin to make progress in big strides.[414]

In addition to sending general work reports and translated excerpts from the inspection department's reviews of PLAN-supported orphanages, Gerald Tannebaum kept in close personal correspondence with executive chairman Edna Blue.[415] In one letter, he sought to reassure her that children's letters accurately reflected their experiences of the Chinese Communist Revolution: "It was no propaganda that the PLA soldiers would not touch a needle or a thread which belonged to the people, and which many of the children wrote to their foster parents. It was actual fact."[416] These internal reassurances that the Communist Revolution had benefited PLAN's work in China complemented children's letters to their foster parents as a crucial aspect of the PLAN China Branch's strategy of people's diplomacy.

"Using the Heart to Influence the Mind": The Politics of Global Intimacy

The PLAN China Branch recognized that children's letters could only be politically effective if the children maintained close, affectionate relationships with their American foster parents. To this effect, the PLAN China Branch sought to use children's letters to foster what it

[414] "China: Program Review (1949)," Box 114, Folder 81, *FPP*.

[415] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[416] Quoted in Matthias Messmer, "China's Realities from the Viewpoints of 'Foreign Experts'," in M. Avrum Ehrlich (ed.), *The Jewish-Chinese Nexus: A Meeting of Civilizations* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 25.

called "sentiment across national boundaries" (*guoji jian de qinggan* 國際間的情感)—its particular phrasing of the concept I call "global intimacy."[417] To be sure, the PLAN China Branch thought that building sentimental ties between Chinese children and American donors was a valuable end in itself:

> In this way, a lonely and suffering child will feel that on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean there truly is a friend who cares about him—helping him to feel a little bit of warmth. Because of the exchange of letters, donors can also feel a sense of responsibility toward one particular orphan. As a result, not only can funding continue to be maintained, but more importantly a type of international sympathy and humanitarian love can also be created.[418]

At the same time, in internal documents the PLAN China Branch frankly acknowledged that maintaining these emotional attachments served both its fundraising and political goals: "The work of PLAN is built upon individual relationships. Whether or not American donors and the Chinese children they support have close relationships strongly affects the development of our work."[419] Through the exchange of translated letters, the PLAN China Branch sought to cultivate intimate ties between Chinese children and their American foster parents that were both emotional and economic, humanitarian and political.

The intimate disclosures contained in children's letters were not spontaneous outpourings of emotion but rather the result of the PLAN China Branch's concerted efforts to facilitate the formation of affective bonds between American foster parents and Chinese children by providing what was in effect an education in epistolary intimacy. In order to balance the twin imperatives of teaching foster parents about the Chinese revolution and sustaining their emotional investment in their foster children, the PLAN China Branch's 1949 annual report instructed that children's

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[417] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 13.

[418] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 9-10.

[419] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

letters "must be soft in tone but firm in substance" (*wai ruan nei ying* 外軟內硬). The report went on to acknowledge, "Of course, this requires a comparatively high level of epistolary skill. Therefore, our education department must ensure that they clearly understand this point."[420] By 1950, the PLAN China Branch had refined its prescriptions on children's letters into a concise formulation: "Use the heart to influence the mind" (*cong ganqing dao lixing* 從感情到理性).[421] Preserving affectionate ties with American foster parents would help ensure that children's stories of revolution were read with sympathy and open-mindedness.

The PLAN China Branch also sought to apply a veneer of equality to the adoption plan by replacing the familial terms of address children had long used for their sponsors with the language of friendship. At the PLAN-funded Shanghai Home for Destitute Children, this change was implemented in August 1949. In his July 1949 letter, a boy named Ping-wei addressed his monthly letter to his sponsor, a woman named Ruth, "Dear foster mother" (*qin'ai de yimu* 親愛的義母). He signed the letter "Your foster son" (*yi'er* 義兒).[422] Just one month later, however, Ping-wei addressed his letter "Dear foster friend" (*qin'ai de yiyou* 親愛的義友) and signed it using the identical term "foster friend."[423] This new practice of avoiding overtly hierarchal language was unevenly enforced, and as long as the basic structure of foreign adults providing money to Chinese children remained unchanged, it seems unlikely that this shift in terminology would have caused either party to view their relationship as one between equals.

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[420] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[421] C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

[422] Letter from Ping-wei to Ruth, July 1949, Box 115, Folder 84, FPP; Case File #C367, Box 48, Folder 45, *FPP*.

[423] Letter from Ping-wei to Ruth, August 10, 1949, Box 115, Folder 84, *FPP*.

The imprint of the PLAN China Branch's prescriptions is visible in the generic quality of many of the children's letters. For example, on July 8, 1950, a 14-year-old boy named Cheng-chung at Shanghai Boystown Orphanage wrote a letter that skillfully applied the PLAN China Branch's recommendations.[424] His letter begins: "Whenever I write letters to you a feeling of warmth and intimacy often rises up inside of me. This is because of the correspondence we have been exchanging back and forth." Only after this affectionate opening does his letter turn to politics: "I love peace. I hate those warmongers who go about starting wars…I think that you also must support peace. Have you signed your name on the peace petition yet? I have already signed my name."[425] Written shortly after the United States had intervened in the Korean War, the letter (and the peace petition to which it referred) was clearly critical of the United States. However, by writing in broad terms against "war" and in favor of "peace," Cheng-chung's letter "used the heart to influence mind" by being "soft in tone but firm in substance."

In some cases, however, children's letters went well beyond these generic requirements to express a deep sense of family intimacy with their sponsors. On February 17, 1949 a boy named Pao at the Baillie School in Gansu Province wrote to his foster mother Phyllis:

> Your words are just those like those of my own mother ringing in my heart. You said that you love me so much. Now, we are mother and son. If the mother loves the child, the son no doubt also loves her. From the bottom of my heart I love you.[426]

For some children, it was the exchange of photographs with their foster parents that contributed to a strong sense of familial intimacy. A boy named Chi-hai wrote, "When I hold up my pen to write the letter to you, I first looked at your photograph for some time…Although it is only a

[424] Case File #C488, Box 48, Folder 47, *FPP*.

[425] Letter by Cheng-chung, July 8, 1950, Box 46, Folder 38, *FPP*.

[426] Letter from Pao, February 17, 1949, Box 115, Folder 86, *FPP*; Case File #C145, Box 47, Folder 41, *FPP*.

picture, it is as though I am talking to you face to face. Really my little soul is always with you. It is as if my lonely heart has found my mother's arms."[427] Other children even described meeting their foster parents in dreams. In an interview with the *New York Herald Tribune*, PLAN advisor Julia Chen relayed (probably hyperbolic) reports of children who spoke of their American foster parents in their dying breaths: "In nearly every case where a child in the plan has perished in the course of the war, she said, the workers in charge have reported that he died speaking of his American foster parent. Often the sick child's last act has been to write a letter thanking his foster mother and asking her not to grieve."[428] While relationships between Chinese children and their American foster parents rarely reached such levels of emotional intensity, these letters and many others like them testify to the emotional significance that children and their foster parents might invest in their "adoptive" relationships.

"We Do Not Have Enough Control over the Children's Letters": Translation, Censorship, and the Problem of Off-Script Letters

Imposing rigid discipline on children writing from 27 institutions in 14 cities across China was easier said than done.[429] Every one of the letters written by children through PLAN China Branch's adoption program that I have read is unique. With the exception of children who were too young to write, PLAN China Branch bylaws required that all children write out their letters in their own hand.[430] The great variety of handwriting seen across these letters—sometimes precociously elegant, sometimes clumsy and juvenile, sometimes all but illegible—

[427] Letter by Chi-Hai, February 3, 1949, Box 115, Folder 86, *FPP*.

[428] "A Child's-Eye View of War in China," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 6, 1949, A8.

[429] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 24-26.

[430] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 32.

confirms that this rule was at least generally observed. Oftentimes, letters deviated dramatically from the PLAN China Branch's recommendations. The PLAN China Branch readily admitted as much in an internal report from 1950: "We do not have enough control over the children's letters. Since liberation, the children's political level has become very high, but their propaganda skills remain poor." For example, the report continued, some children "decry American imperialism and lecture to their sponsors, displaying the erroneous tendencies of excessively harsh language or excessively leftist ideology."[431] A prime example of one such letter, on July 30, 1950 a boy named Chin-Yung wrote to his foster parents:

> Today the people's most hated scoundrel Chiang Kai-shek is still using American-made planes, weapons, and bullets to slaughter his fellow Chinese people. They are deluded to think they can stop the People's Liberation Army from attacking and liberating the people of Taiwan…I don't understand why some countries want to interfere in the affairs of other countries. Can you tell me in your response?[432]

The PLAN China Branch partially blamed such harshly worded and overtly anti-American letters for the bevy of discontinued adoptions it suffered throughout 1950. PLAN records show that the number of foster parents with adoptions in China declined sharply from 350 in January 1950 to 134 in November 1950.[433]

Yet if the PLAN China Branch worried that children might alienate their sponsors with naked political propaganda, an analysis of their letters reveals that more often children deviated from their prescriptions by neglecting to promote the Chinese revolution altogether. On June 15, 1949, a girl named Hsiu-yun at the Hsiang Shan orphanage near Beijing wrote a letter that

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[431] C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

[432] Letter by Chin-Yung, July 30, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*; Case File #C191, Box 47, Folder 42, *FPP*.

[433] Molumphy, 104.

eschewed politics and instead shared a poem she composed on a fan she made herself out of cardboard:

> The wind blows into the fan
> I grasp it inside of my hand
> If someone wants to borrow it
> They'll have to wait till winter hits.[434]

On July 15, 1950, with the United States and China on the brink of military conflict in Korea, a boy named Lien-Hsi at the Shanghai Home for Destitute Children wrote his American foster parents a brief letter all about his love for summer:

> Summer is very fun. The cicadas in the trees sing beautiful music. At night the fireflies glow. I like to catch them and put them inside of a bottle. I think that summer is very fun.[435]

As these letters and many more like them demonstrate, children were *not required* to take up the explicitly political topics suggested by the PLAN China Branch.

Although I have not come across any letters that overtly criticize the Chinese Communist Party, some letters painted a bleak portrait of life after liberation. On July 12, 1949, nearly half a year after the liberation of Beijing, a boy named Chih-sun wrote to his foster mother to describe what he saw on a fieldtrip they took to the outskirts of the city. His letter reads like a chronicle of misery. He describes sweat-drenched workers emerging from a coal mine "like ants swarming out of a hole" and farmers "working with knitted brows" because drought had led to a poor wheat harvest. Finally, he describes returning to the city to see people who were once landlords, rich peasants, and Nationalist soldiers peddling their old possessions to eke out a

[434] Case File #C263, Box 47, Folder 43, *FPP*; Letter by Hsiu-yun, June 15, 1949, Box 114, Folder 80, *FPP*. The original text of her poem reads: "扇子有風，拿在手中，有人來借，等到立冬."

[435] Case File #C565, Box 48, Folder 49, *FPP*; Letter by Lien-Hsi, July 15, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*.

living. "Before they enjoyed wealth," he wrote. "Now they are suffering."[436] By dramatically deviating from the script, letters such as this one reveal that the PLAN China Branch required the active participation of children in order for its adoption plan to function as "people's diplomacy."

When the PLAN China Branch felt that the content or tone of a child's letter threatened its philanthropic or political goals, they turned to the process of translation as a means of censorship. The PLAN China Branch's book *Work for the Suffering Children* points out how the necessity of translating their correspondence allowed them to mediate the relationships between children and their foster parents: "What needs to be explained here is that they do not communicate directly but instead through our organization. Therefore we can pay close attention to and carefully translate their letters."[437] In internal reports, the PLAN China Branch more strongly hinted at the censorial function of translation. The 1949 annual report stated that until the education department had successfully trained children in the delicate art of writing letters "soft in tone but firm in substance," "all that we can do is to pay extra attention during the process of translation."[438] If these statements are perhaps deliberately vague, careful comparison of the original Chinese-language letters with their English translations reveals examples in which translation was clearly used a tool for censorship. On July 29, 1950, a boy named Shu-san at the Baillie School in Gansu Province wrote a letter in which he boldly encouraged his foster parents to fight for revolution in the United States.[439] A literal translation of an excerpt from his letter would read:

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[436] Letter by Chih-sun, July 12, 1949, Box 114, Folder 83, *FPP*.

[437] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 15.

[438] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[439] Case File #C147, Box 47, Folder 41, *FPP*.

> I wonder what it is like in your country. I think that every one of you must look forward to liberation at an early date. In that case, you must work hard, for in the course of liberation there will arise many difficulties. For example, many progressive thinkers will be captured, jailed, and interrogated with torture. This is a necessary stage of revolutionary work, and we can learn important lessons from it while at the same time we will come to hate it even more. This is my opinion. I do not know if it is correct.[440]

In contrast, the corresponding section of the PLAN China Branch's English-language translation reads as follows:

> I wonder how is the general condition in your country. I am sure that every one of you wishes to enjoy the full liberty, but it can only be achieved at the cost of countless struggles. In the course of a revolution, it is not uncommon that so many people sacrifice their lives in order to realize the happiness of the mass people.[441]

In the English translation, "liberation" (*jie fang* 解放) has been rendered as "full liberty," and his appeal to his foster parents to struggle for revolution has been edited to read as a statement about the difficulty of revolution in the abstract. Clearly, the PLAN China Branch feared that encouraging foster parents to incite revolution risked jeopardizing their support for the program.

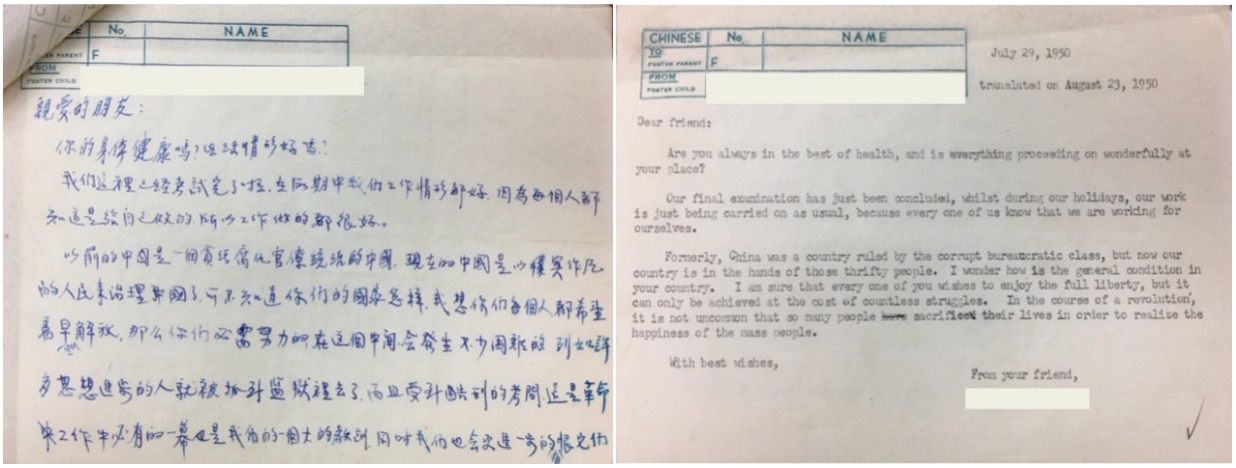

Figure 3.2. Chinese original and English translation of letter by Shu-san. The PLAN China Branch used the necessity of translating letters as a tool of censorship. Box 46, Folder 38, *FPP*.

[440] Letter from Shu-san, July 29, 1950, Box 46, Folder 38, *FPP*.

[441] English translation of letter from Shu-san, August 23, 1950, Box 46, Folder 38, *FPP*.

The PLAN China Branch's practice of censorship through translation benefits the historian by rendering the logic of censorship legible. The PLAN China Branch used its role as translator to omit the "excessively leftist" content they found counterproductive, but I have encountered no evidence that they fabricated the contents of letters. They could suggest potential topics for children's letters, coach them on style and tone, and even censor problematic passages, but the PLAN China Branch ultimately relied on the children themselves to provide the unique content of people's diplomacy through their inimitable stories of life during the Chinese Communist Revolution.

Children's Tales of Revolution

Children's letters to their American foster parents are unique for the immediacy with which they conveyed life during the tumultuous, heady days of the Chinese revolution for a foreign audience. In as much as they were part of a carefully crafted plan to secure material and ideological support for the Chinese Communist Revolution abroad, an analysis of these letters can help unpack the specific content of "people's diplomacy." On the other hand, in each letter's uniqueness we can glimpse how a particular group of Chinese children participated in one of the great events of twentieth-century world history, not least in their role as letter writers.

During the spring and summer of 1949, as the Chinese Civil War entered its final months, many children wrote to their foster parents with personal stories of atrocities committed by the American-backed Nationalist army. Among the most chilling of these letters are dozens describing the Nationalist air raids of Shanghai that left an estimated 810 people dead, 1,494

people wounded, and 2,530 homes destroyed between June 1949 and March 1950.[442] While the Nationalist air raids of Shanghai received significant coverage in the American press, such news reports could not compare with the visceral immediacy of letters from children living through the bombings.[443] For example, on July 3, 1949 a 14-year-old boy named Mao-mao at Shan Hai Science and Labor Union wrote to his foster parents:

> One day while we were in class we suddenly heard the buzzing *weng weng* sound of airplanes. Moments later we also heard the rumbling sound of bomb after bomb exploding. The walls inside the classroom shook… Everyone hates the Nationalists' reckless behavior.[444]

Such letters transformed the Nationalists' air raids from just one of many far-away tragedies into an attack waged on Americans' very own "adopted" Chinese children.

In order to fully understand how children's letters constructed particular narratives of the Chinese Civil War for their American foster parents, it is important to cross-reference these letters with the case histories sent to foster parents when they "adopted" a Chinese child. Through these case histories, the PLAN China Branch could shape the context through which Americans would interpret their foster children's letters. For instance, on July 1, 1949, a boy named Ping-pu wrote a letter similarly expressing outrage at the recent Nationalist bombings of Shanghai: "Several days ago Nationalist planes came again to bomb Shanghai. About 500

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[442] Xie Zhongqiang 謝忠強, "Xin Zhongguo Chengli Chuqi Shanghai Shi Fan Hongzha Douzheng Shulüe 新中國成立初期上海市反轟炸鬥爭述略 [An Outline of Shanghai's Anti-Bombing Struggle in the Early Period of New China]." *Junshi Lishi Yanjiu* 軍事歷史研究 [Military Historical Research] No. 4 (2012), 66-67.

[443]For example, a front-page *New York Times* story on June 30, 1949 described "two tiny children crouched wailing and sobbing over the body of a young man…unrecognizable in his shroud of mud."[443] That same day, the *Boston Globe* described the bombings as an "apparently indiscriminate raid" in which "200 civilians were killed and 400 wounded." See Walter Sullivan, "Heavy Bombers Raid Shanghai: Dead Put at 82 as Slums Are Hit," June 30, 1949, *New York Times*; "Air Raid Kills 200 Civilians in Shanghai: Nationalists Drop 20 Bombs on Slum Districts," June 30, 1949, *Daily Boston Globe*.

[444] Letter from Mao-mao, July 3, 1949, Box 115, Folder 84, *FPP*; Case File #C382, Box 48, Folder 45, *FPP*.

people were killed or hurt. Now the Chinese people hate the Nationalists even more."[445]

Turning to Ping-pu's case history, we learn that he was 15 years old, born in Hangzhou, and attending the Yu Tsai school. We also see a first-person account of how he became an orphan:

> As the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, we had lots of air-raids and my parents were killed finally in one of the raids which also destroyed our home and everything. I was then only five years old. I became a beggar in the streets. In the daytime I begged my meals and spent my nights in some dilapidated temples.[446]

In light of this story, Ping-pu's July 1949 letter takes on new layers of meaning. While experiencing the Nationalist air raids of Shanghai in the summer of 1949, his mind must have flashed back to the Japanese air raids that killed his parents, destroyed his home, and condemned him to years begging on the streets. In the context of his case history, Ping-pu's letter helped build the narrative that the Nationalists had replaced Japan as the new threat to China's children and would need to be defeated if they were to grow up in peace and safety.

As the civil war came to a close, children in newly liberated areas began to use their letters to contrast their previous lives under the Nationalists with their current lives under the new Communist government. In one of the rare letters to directly address the gendered experiences of Chinese children, a girl named Tien-tien at the Peking Nursery wrote about the new opportunities afforded to girls:

> Our school has added some new students. They are girls who in the old society were oppressed and tricked, which is to say they were sold in brothels…They are eager to improve, smart, and lively, and they study very hard…We have a lot of sympathy for them. I truly hate the unreasonable system of the old society.[447]

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[445] Letter from Ping-pu, July 1, 1949, Box 115, Folder 84, *FPP*.

[446] Case File #C399, Box 48, Folder 45, *FPP*

[447] Letter from Tien-tien, June 30, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*; Case File #540, Box 48, Folder 48, *FPP*.

Other letters conveyed a palpable sense that children were for the first time able to participate in important national and international affairs. Fourteen-year-old Chi-kuan, also at the Peking Nursery, described how he had the opportunity to meet a foreign ambassador: "At 4PM on Saturday April 15th China's foreign friend the ambassador of Czechoslovakia showed us a movie. It was really interesting. This is an unprecedented activity. Because it is the first time a foreign ambassador played together with us poor children."[448] Brimming with a newfound sense of purpose, such letters painted a picture of the People's Republic of China as a place where children were active agents in shaping a bright future for themselves, China, and the world.

In certain cases, letters dwelled upon matters that must have struck foster parents as unlikely subjects for children to concern themselves with. For example, on July 10, 1949, 13-year-old Chung-chin at the Changchow Poor Children's Home wrote to his foster parents about the government's campaign against currency speculation: "The reason prices fluctuated was because there were many silver dollar peddlers stirring up trouble and disrupting the financial situation. So the government ordered the silver dollar peddlers to be eliminated, forbid silver dollar trading, and asked the army to help in completing these two great tasks."[449] While currency speculation may seem an improbable topic for a 13 year-old's letter, the PLAN China Branch took various steps to provide children with the vocabulary to discuss government policy.[450] The *FPP Correspondent* (*yiyanghui tongxun* 義養會通訊), a monthly newsletter

[448] Letter from Chi-Kuan, May 6, 1950, Box 115, Folder 84, *FPP*; Case File #C530, Box 48, Folder 48, *FPP*.

[449] Letter from Chung-chin, July 10, 1949, Box 115, Folder 84, *FPP*; Case File #C353, Box 48, Folder 45, *FPP*.

[450] The PLAN China Branch's efforts were part of widespread youth political education campaigns in revolution-period Shanghai. For example, in 1949 the Shanghai Branch of the Communist Youth League formed a 60-member propaganda team to work throughout Shanghai promoting the "movement to oppose the speculation, rigging, and financial sabotage of the remnants of the Nationalist reactionary forces." "Qingnian tuan Shanghaishi gongzuo weiyuanhui nan yi qu gongzuo dui, qingnian tuan shanghaishi gongzuo weiyuanhui xi er qu gongzuo dui guanyu fandui yinyuan touji de xuanchuan zongjie 青年團上海市工作委員會南一區工作隊，青年團上海市工作委員會西二區工作隊關於反對銀元投機的宣傳總結 [Communist Youth League Shanghai Working Committee No. 1

distributed to PLAN-supported institutions, published numerous pieces intended to teach children about new government initiatives. In one of the livelier examples, the March 1950 issue included the music and lyrics to a song titled "Hurry Up and Buy Commodity-Indexed Victory Bonds" (*kuai mai shengli zheshi gongzhai ge* 快買勝利折實公債歌):

> *Oh the sun is rising, shining all a-bright*
> *To issue public bonds is what's right*
> *Oh the sun is rising, red in all its might*
> *To support the government we will fight*
> *Oh the sun is rising, red for all in sight*
> *Quick buy public bonds and render great service—all right!*[451]

By transmitting the political education they received at PLAN-supported orphanages to their American foster parents, children's letters provided an essential link between domestic youth mobilization and international propaganda.

The corpus of Chinese children's letters sent to the United States through the adoption plan raised several questions, as relevant to the PLAN China Branch at the time as they are to the historian today. Who were the Americans receiving these letters? What did they make of what their foster children told them about the Chinese Revolution? In short, was people's diplomacy working? To answer these questions, the PLAN China Branch collected information about American donors through which it could analyze their class backgrounds and political leanings—and adjust its program accordingly.

Meet the Foster Parents

The PLAN China Branch's fundraising in the United States is best understood in the context of a decade-long history of humanitarian fundraising for vulnerable children abroad on

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South District Work Group and No. 2 West District Work Group Regarding Opposing Silver Dollar Speculation Propaganda Summary]," 1949, C21-1-12-31, *SMA*.

[451] "Kuai mai shengli zheshi gongzhai ge 快買勝利折實公債歌) [Hurry up and Buy Commodity-Indexed Victory Bonds]," *Yiyanghui Tongxun* 義養會通訊 [FPP Correspondent], No. 14 (March 1950), 2.

the part of the American left (see also Chapter Four). As Laura Briggs has demonstrated, Americans' concern with rescuing children overseas emerged in the 1930s out of a "left anti-Fascist internationalist front" arrayed against German Nazism, Franco's war against the Spanish Republic, and the Japanese invasion of China. She argues that heart-rending photographic images of mothers and children in the midst of these conflicts were "leftist images that demanded attention for working-class lives" abroad. By portraying their subjects as "hardworking but down on their luck," these images simultaneously stirred sympathies for vulnerable children across national, racial, and cultural boundaries and "built support for popular organizations and socialist movements."[452] Originally focused on helping the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, PLAN had been born out of this 1930s popular front movement. A decade later, the PLAN China Branch's fundraising campaigns in the United States built upon this tradition by seeking to train the sympathies of its progressive, internationalist donor base on the figure of the Chinese child.

The advertisements that PLAN used to attract donors in the United States provide insight into the types of Americans it sought to recruit as foster parents. Unlike other adoption programs that deployed anti-Communist rhetoric, PLAN avoided overtly political appeals and instead focused directly on child suffering.[453] In some cases, however, PLAN advertisements highlighted issues like social inequality more likely to appeal to the American left. An October 1948 advertisement quoted a letter from a 13-year-old boy named Chen Tsen-yuan that observed

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[452] Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durhma: Duke University Press, 2012), 129-135.

[453] For example, in articles announcing the expansion of PLAN's work into China in the *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune*, executive chairman Edna Blue cited "appalling reports of misery and starvation," including the figure that "90 per cent of the many thousands of corpses picked up in Shanghai streets last winter were those of children. "New Foster Parents Project," October 1, 1947, *New York Times*, 32; "China's Starving Children," November 17, 1947, *New York Herald Tribune*, 22.

the vast disparities between China's rich and poor: "In the cold winter it is not much surprise to hear that 40 to 50 children with not enough clothes died in one day of coldness…of course the rich people wear as much as they can carry."[454] PLAN advertisements also highlighted prominent progressive figures who served as foster parents, including first ladies Eleanor Roosevelt and Bess Truman, writers Helen Keller and Thomas Mann, and Congressman Will Rogers Jr.[455] Moreover, executive chairman Edna Blue strongly denounced those who would "use relief as a political weapon" by refusing to support children in Communist countries. She was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "They must learn the true meaning of relief work. I have never met a child who was a republican, Fascist or Communist."[456] As a result, conservatives sometimes criticized PLAN as a "Red front organization."[457] While PLAN was officially nonpolitical, it courted progressive Americans as foster parents and publicly criticized the use of humanitarianism as a tool of U.S. Cold War foreign policy. In both these regards, it was an ideal partner for the CWF's experiment in revolutionary humanitarianism.

As the PLAN China Branch did not receive biographical information about American foster parents, they relied upon the information foster parents shared in their letters to gain an understanding of the donors who were the targets of people's diplomacy. According to their analysis, the categories of people most likely to serve as foster parents included students, religious people, teachers, community organizations, workers, capitalists, and public figures.[458]

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[454] "Eyes That Trust, Plead, and Accuse," October 24, 1948, *New York Herald Tribune*, F48.

[455] "Eyes that Trust, Plead, and Accuse," November 16, 1947, *Daily Boston Globe*, A31.

[456] "Politics is Decried in Aid to Children: Head of Foster Parents Plan Tells of Tour, Defends Help in Satellite Countries," August 18, 1948, *New York Times*, 22.

[457] See for example, William Fulton, "Push 'Do-Good' Schemes Over Radio, In Press: Some Are Drum Beaters for Trumanism," March 19, 1951, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10.

[458] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 11-12.

In addition to creating a demographic portrait of American donors, the PLAN China Branch also analyzed their letters to gauge how their participation in the adoption plan affected their views on China. While they found most foster parents ill-informed about Chinese politics, they believed that children's letters were providing them with a favorable impression of the new China:

> From the foster parents' letters, we can see clearly that the majority of Americans do not have a good understanding of the surrounding political situation. Their letters generally discuss things like family affairs and religion. Although these kinds of people have an indifferent attitude toward China, their reaction to the People's Republic of China has actually been fairly good. Of course, there is also a minority of foster parents' letters that are indeed very reactionary.[459]

While some sponsors remained "indifferent" to the People's Republic of China, and a small number were apparently downright hostile, the PLAN China Branch initially remained optimistic that children's letters were gradually improving their American foster parents' views of the Chinese Communist Revolution.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate any original letters that American foster parents wrote to Chinese children through the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan. However, the PLAN China Branch's book *Work for the Suffering Children* published two examples of letters from American foster parents in Chinese translation. While these letters should not be read as representative of sponsors' letters in general, they modeled the type of responses the PLAN China Branch sought—and at least occasionally received—from American donors. The first letter, from an American identified as "E.H." to his foster child Ping on April 7, 1949, expresses approval of Ping's commitment to work for social equality:

> I am extremely interested in your determination to dedicate yourself to improving the lives of working people…From the perspective of morality, there are some people who have too much, and then there are others who have nothing at all and have even been

[459] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

> deprived of life's basic necessities. This is wrong indeed. Therefore, we really must struggle to improve the lives of such people.[460]

The second letter, from "Byron" to Zhenru on November 12, 1948, asked after Zhenru's safety in the midst of China's civil war: "I read with great attention the news about your war. I pray that you and your compatriots will not endure even more suffering."[461] Expressing concern for the plight of working people and condemning the suffering wrought by the civil war, these letters meshed well with Chinese Communist rhetoric. By publishing them as examples, the PLAN China Branch sought to show a domestic audience that American foster parents were not "imperialists" but ordinary people who shared their desires for China's future.

Privately, however, the PLAN China Branch's initial optimism that children's letters were improving Americans' views of Communist China gave way to the realization that most foster parents were unwilling to engage in protracted political exchanges. A mid-1950 report summarized the changes that foster parents' letters had undergone in the ten months that had elapsed since the founding of the PRC:

> Stage 1: Show concern for children's lives after liberation, very much want to know about the real situation in new China.
>
> Stage 2: Apart from the small minority who have reactionary thinking, the majority of donors have an initial understanding and favorable impression of China's People's Government.
>
> Stage 3: They go from not understanding Chinese affairs to having a favorable impression, but in the end they ultimately go silent. The majority of sponsors' letters do not say a single world about China's domestic situation. Those that do are a very small minority, and they often distort the facts.[462]

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[460] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 19-21.

[461] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 21.

[462] C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

As of mid-1950, the results of people's diplomacy were decidedly mixed. PLAN had attracted a large and diverse group of left-leaning Americans by appealing to themes like combating poverty and inequality while publicly criticizing the denial of humanitarian aid to people in Communist states. Moreover, its analysis of foster parents' letters suggested that many had gained a positive impression of the Chinese revolution from their foster children. Nevertheless, as time stretched on foster parents became increasingly unwilling to engage with their adopted children about the political situation in China, and many stopped writing altogether. Internally, the PLAN China Branch complained that "the American imperialists' actions to oppose our people have hindered donations and interfered with the affection between donors and their adopted children."[463] With the United States and China on the brink of war in Korea, the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan, already on shaky ground, would face its most difficult challenge yet.

Follow the Money (I): The China Welfare Fund Children's Theatre

The new approach to global humanitarianism articulated by Song Qingling and implemented by the PLAN China Branch sought to meet not only the ideological but also the material needs of the Chinese Communist Revolution. Therefore, an analysis of the politics of the PLAN China Branch adoption plan must answer a fundamental question: Where did the money go? The dislocations of the civil war had left China in desperate need of funds to meet its basic social welfare needs. In this context, the PLAN China Branch channeled funding to "progressive" child welfare institutions that could simultaneously provide for homeless children and train them to participate actively in the revolution.

[463] C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

The China Welfare Fund Children's Theatre (*zhongguo fuli jijinhui ertong jutuan* 中國福利基金會兒童劇團, hereinafter "Children's Theatre") makes a particularly good case study through which to examine how PLAN funds were spent on the ground in China. First, as the only PLAN-supported institution directly operated by the CWF, it served as a model of the type of institution to which the CWF sought to direct global humanitarian aid. Moreover, the PLAN China Branch closely monitored and explicitly endorsed the Children's Theatre's work. Its 1949 annual report counted the Children's Theatre among several institutions that "maintain complete and friendly cooperation with PLAN." Finally, while in some cases PLAN funded only a small number of children at a large institution, it directly supported nearly two-thirds (30 of 48) of the children at the Children's Theatre.[464]

Founded in Shanghai in the spring of 1947, the Children's Theatre was a children's theatrical troupe consisting primarily of orphans and other impoverished children. Equal parts child welfare institution and performing arts ensemble, it provided shelter, education, and vocational training to its members while also offering cultural programming for a mass audience of children. However, in the context of full-scale civil war between the Communists and Nationalists, the Children's Theatre quickly found its work implicated in the political conflict. In 1948 the Children's Theatre rehearsed an original play titled *The Circus* (*xiaoma xiban* 小馬戲班) that they intended to perform at schools throughout Shanghai. However, the vast majority of school authorities declined their offer, apparently fearing that association with Song Qingling and the CWF might attract negative attention from Nationalist Party agents. Instead, the Children's Theatre turned to underground Communist Party members who connected them with "progressive" teachers and students interested in the performance. Ultimately, they staged

[464] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

performances in nine separate locations over nine consecutive days, reaching an audience of more than 10,000 children.[465] Through the experience of staging *The Circus*, the Children's Theatre forged close connections with the underground Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai that would fundamentally shape its work until the city's liberation in May 1949.

Throughout the early months of 1949, the Children's Theatre organized highly political artistic activities with Communist-affiliated teachers and students—despite the increasing threat from school authorities and Nationalist agents. "Under the watch of secret agents," Children's Theatre members met clandestinely with students in dormitories, classrooms, and the corners of playgrounds. They taught these students skits about the liberated areas, new-style songs, and old folk arts like the lion dance and stilt-walking that they infused with new meanings "explaining that the people's power has already become great, but the dark rule is becoming more intense, so that the only option is to struggle—to wage a ruthless struggle with the multitudes of the reactionary faction." This work carried genuine risks for the children who carried it out. They divided into small groups and frequently switched locations to evade detection, but some university students who had attended Children's Theatre activities were arrested nevertheless. The military metaphors through which the Children's Theatre described this "guerrilla-" (*youji shi* 游擊式) and "shock attack-" (*tuji shi* 突擊式) style work underscores the extent to which they framed their activities as taking part on the side of the Communists in the civil war.[466]

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[465] "Zhongguo fulihui ertong jutuan lishi yan 中國福利會兒童劇團歷史沿革 [The Historical Development of the China Welfare Institute Children's Theatre]," December 1950, C45-2-10-47, *SMA*.

[466] "Yi zhi shaonian ertong wenyi gongzuozhe de duiwu—zhongguo fulihui guanyu zhongguo fulihui ertong jutuan shengzhang qingkuang de jieshao 一支少年兒童文藝工作者的隊伍 ── 中國福利會關於中國福利會兒童劇團生長情況的介紹 [A Children's Art and Culture Workers Army—The China Welfare Fund's Introduction to the China Welfare Fund Children's Theatre's Development]," October 9, 1950, C45-1-26-10, *SMA*; C45-2-10-47, *SMA*.

After the liberation of Shanghai in May 1949, the Children's Theatre quickly emerged as one of the city's most visible and influential cultural institutions. In the first two years of the PRC alone, the Children's Theatre staged 217 performances that reached an estimated audience of 300,000 people.[467] They also performed in at least 16 parades and mass demonstrations during this period, for occasions ranging from the founding of the PRC to International Children's Day to the Movement to Oppose Currency Speculation.[468] As Children's Theatre reports would have it, the children enthusiastically embraced their heavy workload in the name of revolution: "They did not know fatigue. They did not know hardship. They had but one conviction: to work—for the fatherland, for the great working people who were sick and tired of pain and exploitation!"[469] Children's letters to their foster parents, however, sometimes tell a different story. Thirteen-year-old Yu-li of the Children's Theatre wrote: "Recently my health has not been good. I get sick often. I get sick more than once a week. This asthma is very difficult. But in this kind of organization, there's nothing that can be done."[470]

It was the Children's Theatre's June 1950 production of *Little Snowflake* (*xiao xuehua* 小雪花) that announced its arrival as a major cultural force in post-liberation Shanghai. An adaptation of a 1948 Russian children's play by Vera Liubimova about "how the American imperialists treat the black children within their own country," it was their largest and most

[467] "Zhongguo fulihui guanyu liang nian lai chengjiu qingkuang de baogao 中國福利會關於兩年來成就情況的報告 [Report Regarding the Accomplishments and State of Affairs of the China Welfare Institute Over the Past Two Years]," October 1951, C45-1-54-4, *SMA*.

[468] C45-2-10-47, *SMA*.

[469] C45-1-26-10, *SMA*.

[470] Letter from Yu-li, July 4, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*; Case File #C470, Box 48, Folder 47, *FPP*.

ambitious production yet.[471] *Little Snowflake* was performed 30 times throughout the summer of 1950 at Shanghai's Lanxin Theater, reaching a total estimated audience of 58,000 people, the vast majority of whom were children.[472] A deeply ideological play that achieved wild popularity, *Little Snowflake* offers a vivid illustration of how the Children's Theatre channeled humanitarian funds into a potent mixture of social welfare, youth mobilization, and international propaganda.

Little Snowflake sought to educate children about American capitalism, imperialism, and racism while evoking their sympathy with oppressed people around the world.[473] Set at an American school, the play follows the tribulations of a black boy named Dick (nicknamed "Little Snowflake") who is abused by a white girl named Angel and her father Big Capitalist Bill.[474] The child actors of *Little Snowflake* often filled their letters to their sponsors with their own interpretations of the play's educational value. As 15-year-old actor Su-ping wrote, "This play is mainly to teach children not to have close-minded racist thinking."[475] However, beneath the surface of its heavy-handed critique of American racism, the plot of *Little Snowflake* subtly reflected the CWF's efforts to articulate a new justification for accepting global humanitarian aid

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[471] Milla Fedorova, "The Pedagogy of Patriotism: America and Americans in Soviet Children's Literature," in *Russian/Soviet Studies in the United States, Amerikanistika in Russia: Mutual Representations in Academic Projects*, Eds. Ivan Kurilla and Victoria I. Zhuravleva (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 131; C45-1-26-10, *SMA*.

[472] "Zhongguo fulihui 1950nian gongzuo baogao (xiuzheng ban) 中國福利會 1950 年工作報告 (修正版) [China Welfare Institute 1950 Work Report (Revised Version)]," 1950, C45-1-18-27, *SMA*; C45-1-54-4, *SMA*; "Zhongguo fulihui ertong jutuan 1950 nian shangbanye nian gongzuo zongjie 中國福利會兒童劇團 1950 年上半年工作總結 [Summary Report on the China Welfare Institute Children's Theatre's Work in the First Half of 1950]," August 1950, C45-2-7-25, *SMA*.

[473] On the origins of Chinese identification with nationalist and anti-colonialist movements in the non-Euro-American world, see Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

[474] C45-1-26-10, *SMA*.

[475] Letter from Su-ping, July 20, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*; Case File #C475, Box 48, Folder 47, *FPP*.

in the context of surging anti-imperialist sentiment. The play is full of progressive American characters that ultimately succeed in defending Little Snowflake Dick against Big Capitalist Bill. Fervent advocates for downtrodden children, they symbolized international progressive forces through which the CWF sought to build a new and revolutionary global humanitarianism.

Did *Little Snowflake* achieve its didactic goals? Contemporary accounts suggest that the play was extremely well received. In some cases, audience reactions were downright raucous. One vivid account from October 1950 describes (perhaps with some embellishment) the visceral responses of an audience of children:

> When the black child was arrested by American agents — how they shouted! How they yelled! "Dick, look out! There's someone behind you who wants to arrest you!" And when the black child escaped from jail with his clothes ripped and his body bloody from beatings, the actors cried and the audience cried with them. They cried with passion and some even sobbed out loud. However, when that capitalist again appeared on the stage, the children's tear-stained faces turned angry. "Scoundrel! Hey! Get out of here! Get!" They stomped the floor with their little legs and stood up from their seats so that the theatre fell into chaos and the play was almost unable to continue.[476]

However, it was not until after the performances concluded that audiences truly got out of hand. In his July 4, 1950 letter to his foster parents, Yu-li described the scene that often unfolded once the curtain dropped:

> When the performances end, the little audience members come backstage looking to beat up the bad guy. The manager says to them, "This is just a play, please don't do that." But the little audience members still charge backstage. "It doesn't matter, the bad guy still must be beaten!" So in the end they still cause a bit of trouble.[477]

The written reflections of the children and adults who watched *Little Snowflake* provide further evidence of the play's profound impact. After attending a performance, a 14-year-old girl named Chung-lan wrote her foster parents to describe what she took from the show:

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[476] C45-1-26-10, *SMA*.

[477] Letter from Yu-li, July 4, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*; Case File #C470, Box 48, Folder 47, *FPP*.

> Because white people can simply beat black people to death and the government doesn't care, when we saw the white people beating the black people, some of my classmates cried, and I cried too. I think that white people and black people are both people. Why can white people bully black people like that? It really is not right.[478]

Chung-lan's intense emotional response to the violence depicted on stage prompted her to reflect more broadly on the injustice of racial inequality. Chung-lan and her classmates were not unique in being deeply affected by the play. After one performance of *Little Snowflake*, a middle school teacher wrote a letter to the Children's Theatre declaring, "There is not a single advanced teacher who could within one hundred minutes produce even one percent of the effectiveness of this work!" The manager of the Lanxin Theater where the performances were held claimed, "Ever since this theatre opened, this play has gotten the best reaction. It really lets you see the power of New China!"[479]

To be sure, the money that the PLAN China Branch sent to the Children's Theatre was used to provide food, shelter, education, and vocational training to the poor and orphaned children who were its members. At the same time, the Children's Theatre used PLAN funding to participate deeply and meaningfully in the Chinese Communist Revolution—sometimes to an extent that risked the health and safety of the children under its care. By utilizing PLAN funds for its potent mixture of social welfare work, youth mobilization, and international propaganda, the Children's Theatre offered a new model for how to deploy global humanitarian aid in the context of the Chinese Communist Revolution.

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[478] Letter from Chung-lan, July 22, 1950, Box 46, Folder 39, *FPP*; Case File #C209, Box 47, Folder 42, *FPP*.

[479] C45-1-26-10, *SMA*

Follow the Money (II): Shanghai Boystown

In addition to the Children's Theatre, another of the most prominent institutions to receive PLAN China Branch support was a home for troubled youth called Shanghai Boystown (*shaonian cun* 少年村). Shanghai Boystown was originally founded by the Buddhist Jingye Society in June 1940 as a wartime shelter for "street urchins" (*liulang ertong* 流浪兒童) called the Jingye Foundling.[480] After the conclusion of WWII, the Jingye Foundling was moved to Dachang in the northern outskirts of Shanghai and rechristened Shanghai Boystown after Irish Priest Edward Flanagan's famous "Boys Town" orphanage in Nebraska.[481] The prominent Buddhist writer and philanthropist Zhao Puchu was chosen to serve as its superintendent.[482]

Shanghai Boystown began accepting PLAN funding in September 1947, and it quickly became almost entirely dependent on the adoption plan to meet its basic expenses.[483] Sixty of the ninety children at Shanghai Boystown were enrolled in the adoption plan, and monthly financial reports show that PLAN funding was stretched to cover everything from food, clothes, and medicine for the children to staff salaries and repair work.[484] In fact, a February 1950 report acknowledged that Shanghai Boystown "relies solely on PLAN's allowance for its monthly

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[480] *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti: jingye jiaoyangyuan di yi ci baogao* 流浪兒童教養問題：淨業教養院第一次報告 [The Problem of Educating Street Urchins: The First Report of the Jingye Reformatory] (Shanghai: Jingye Jiaoyangyuan, 1942), 5. For an overview of the distinctive approach to child welfare pioneered by the Jingye Foundling and Shanghai Boystown, see Apter, 102-111.

[481] "Shanghai Shaoniancun—liulang ertong de da jiating 上海少年村——流浪兒童的大家庭 [Shanghai Boystown: A Big Family for Street Urchins]," *Shen Bao*, May 23, 1946, 8.

[482] Zhang Dawei 張大衛 (ed.), *Xue di hongqi fei hou—cong jingye jiaoyangyuan dao shanghai shaoniancun* 雪地紅旗飛吼——從淨業教養院到上海少年村 [A Red Flag Flies Above the Snowy Ground—From the Jingye Foundling to Shanghai Boystown], (Shanghai: Shanghaishi Baoshanqu Fojiao Xiehui, 2001), 7-8.

[483] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[484] "Foster Parents Plan for War Children Monthly Report – Shanghai Boystown," March-July 1949, Box 114, Folder 79, *FPP*.

expenses."[485] The PLAN China Branch's educational and inspection departments visited Boystown regularly, and like the Children's Theatre, it was listed among the institutions with which the PLAN China Branch maintained "complete and friendly cooperation."[486]

Shanghai Boystown closely collaborated with the underground Communist Party in Shanghai, hiring numerous underground Party members as teachers, their salaries paid with PLAN funds. The head instructor at Shanghai Boystown was an underground Party member named Wang Juan who worked under the alias Wang Danren. She later remembered, "We primarily used our work at Boystown as cover to penetrate deeply into the city and carry out some other activities. However, we also had a responsibility to educate the children and youth of Boystown. We also looked for opportunities to impart some revolutionary principles and to train and bring up some activists."[487] In September 1948 Wang Juan and two other Boystown teachers were convicted of conducting organizational and propaganda work for the Communist "bandits" and given multiyear prison sentences.[488] However, their arrests appear to have been treated as isolated cases and did not significantly disrupt life at Shanghai Boystown.[489]

What lessons did these teachers impart to the children under their care? Letters from the children at Shanghai Boystown to their American foster parents suggest the strong ideological bent of the education they received. On June 26, 1949, a boy named Zonghong wrote, "Since I

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[485] *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 140-149.

[486] C45-2-4-4, *SMA*.

[487] Wang Juan 王絹, "Zhao Puchu xiansheng yanhu women dixia dang 趙樸初先生掩護我們地下黨 [Teacher Zhao Puchu Provided Cover for our Underground Party]," in *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 50.

[488] "Hu Shaoniancun feidang jiaoyuan wang danren deng panchu tuxing 滬少年村匪黨教員王淡人等判處徒刑, [Shanghai Boystown Communist Bandit Teacher Wang Danren and others Sentenced to Jail]," *Shen Bao*, September 16, 1948, 2. Wang Danren (王淡人) was sentenced to seven years, Cheng Xu (程旭) to three years, and Cheng Meiming (程枚鳴) to four years.

[489] "Zhao Puchu xiansheng yanhu women dixia dang," 50.

have also suffered the pain of exploitation and oppression, now that I have freed myself, why would I not use my strength to work for the people?"[490] Two months later Lien-shoo wrote, "We still must study hard so that we can reconstruct new China, overthrow the dictatorial reactionary forces, and revive democracy, freedom, and equality. These are the thoughts that are in our minds."[491] Clearly, the underground Communist Party members who taught at Shanghai Boystown infused their political ideals into the education they provided their students, who in turn communicated them to their American foster parents.

In addition to learning revolutionary principles in the classroom, children at Shanghai Boystown were sometimes enlisted to carry out dangerous tasks on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party. For instance, before the liberation of Shanghai three boys formed a "small bicycle team" to secretly transport the prominent Communist educator Duan Lipei between the Boystown campus in Dachang and meetings in Shanghai.[492] They took a different route each time to avoid being followed by Nationalist agents, and sometimes the path was so roundabout that what would have been a one-hour ride took an entire afternoon. However, as one of the boys, Shen Miaogen, later wrote, "for the revolution, for the safety of Teacher Duan Lipei, we were happy to do it no matter how difficult or tiring."[493] It was a 14-year-old boy named Zhang Weizhong who undertook perhaps the most daring mission of any Boystown student. In order to

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[490] *Wei kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 18-19.

[491] Letter from Lien-shoo, August 11, 1949, Box 114, Folder 82, *FPP*.

[492] Duan Lipei had come to work at Jingye Foundling at Zhao Puchu's invitation in 1940. He joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1941 and throughout the 1940s served as one of the primary links between the CCP and Shanghai's circles of progressive educators. See Wang Juexuan 王厥軒, "Yi Dai Mingshi Duan Lipei 一代名師段力佩 [A Great Teacher Of Our Era: Duan Lipei]," *Shanghai Jiaoyu* 上海教育 [Shanghai Education], No. 9 (2011), 50-53.

[493] Shen Miaogen 沈妙根, "Ku jiaotong, shi sheng qing 苦交通，師生情 [Difficult Transportation, The Affection Between Student and Teacher]," in *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 55.

avoid being caught in the fighting of the civil war, in April 1949 Shanghai Boystown evacuated to the original location of the Jingye Foundling in central Shanghai. They shared the courtyard with a group of Nationalist soldiers recuperating from injuries. As he was young and would not attract suspicion, the Jing'an District underground Communist Party instructed Zhang to attempt to locate where the soldiers kept their weapons and ammunition. Zhang frequently went to play with the Nationalist soldiers while furtively searching out where they stored their weapons. Eventually he discovered that they had thrown their weapons and ammunition into a fishpond behind the courtyard. He informed his teachers, and the People's Liberation Army was able to salvage the weapons and ammunition from the water.[494]

In the summer of 1949, many of the older boys left Boystown to join the People's Liberation Army. Shortly after the liberation of Shanghai, a contingent of PLA soldiers moved in beneath Shanghai Boystown in the former courtyard of the Jingye Foundling. At the encouragement of Boystown's head administrator Zhou Wengeng, many boys enthusiastically signed up to join, and 23 ultimately met the requirements and joined the army. Most were assigned to serve in the cultural working corps (*wen gong dui* 文工隊) that staged performances to encourage troops on their way into battle.[495] A boy named Teh-san wrote to his foster father explaining his decision to join the army:

> Although I have left my beloved home Boystown, I will not forget your kindness in providing for me…Although our life in the cultural working corps is difficult, I still get a lot of joy and comfort from the good impressions we make on the audiences in our performances every day.[496]

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[494] Zhang Weizhong 張偉忠, "Wei Shanghai jiefang zuo gongxian 為上海解放作貢獻 [Contributing to the Liberation of Shanghai]," in *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 88-89.

[495] Song Jianhua 宋建華, "Women canjia le renmin jiefangjun 我們參加了人民解放軍 [We Joined the People's Liberation Army]," in *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 89-90.

[496] Letter from Teh-san, 1949, Box 114, Folder 83, *FPP*.

The zeal with which the youth of Shanghai Boystown volunteered for the PLA is perhaps best revealed in the letters of those boys who were turned away because they were too young or did not meet the physical requirements. Chai-po wrote, "Originally I also joined, but I had to come back because I did not pass the physical requirements. I feel very depressed because I know that joining the army to serve the people is the most honorable thing."[497] As for those boys who succeeded in joining the PLA, little could they have expected that they would soon be deployed to Korea to fight against the United States, the country of their former foster parents—and that not all of them would make it back alive.[498]

Unhappy Endings: The Korean War and the Closing of the PLAN China Branch

Gun-chun was one of the 23 Shanghai Boystown students who joined the People's Liberation Army in June 1949.[499] Later that month, he wrote a letter to his foster parents, the Macauleys, explaining his decision. Although he asked them to continue writing, it was in effect his goodbye letter: "I am very thankful to you my foster parents for raising us. Although we have entered society on the path to serve humanity, I still hope that you will write to us, and finally I hope that you will send me pictures of my foster brothers."[500] In October 1950, approximately 14 months after he wrote that letter, China intervened in the Korean War and Gun-chun was deployed to the Korean Peninsula, where he found himself at war with the country of the people he called his foster parents.

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[497] Letter from Chai-po, July 13, 1949, Box 115, Folder 87, *FPP*.

[498] "Women canjia le renmin jiefangjun," 90-91.

[499] "Women canjia le renmin jiefangjun," 90.

[500] Letter from Gun-chun, June 1949, Box 114, Folder 83, *FPP*.

As a member of the cultural working corps, Gun-chun's job was to make costumes and props for a dance troupe that performed to encourage the troops. He was remembered as someone who talked little but was painstaking and meticulous in his work. During the summer of 1951, as the Chinese army retreated north toward the 38th parallel, Gun-chun suffered severe burns on his face and hands from napalm bombs dropped by U.N. forces. He was rushed to a field hospital for treatment, but shortly thereafter the hospital was caught in an attack and he was never heard from again.[501] It was not until years later that one of Gun-chun's former classmates and comrades, Wang Wenxiang, looked him up in the military archives and found the coordinates of his burial site just south of the 38th parallel.[502]

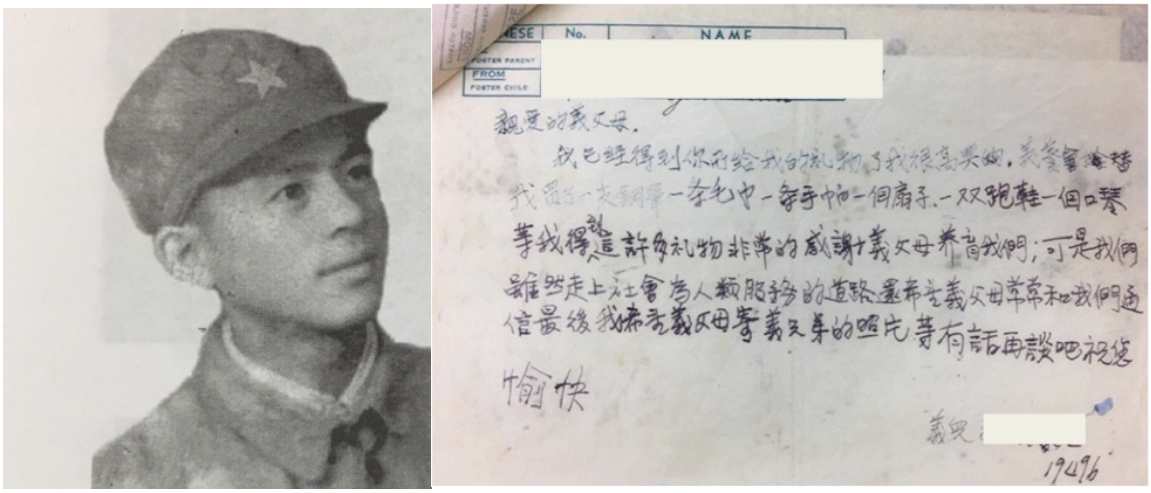

Figure 3.3. A portrait of Gun-chun, who left Shanghai Boystown to join the People's Liberation Army in June 1949. On the right is the final letter he wrote to his foster parents, approximately two years before he died serving in the Korean War. Box 114, Folder 83, *FPP*.

[501] Ren Zhenbei 任鎮北, "Shaoniancun tongxue xue sa chaoxian zhanchang—zhuiji wang tianwen, sun gunquan tongxue 少年村同學血洒朝鮮戰場——追記王天文、孫根泉同學 [The Blood of our Boystown Classmates Spilled on the Battlefield of Korea]," in *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 93-94.

[502] Wang Wenxiang 王文祥, "Yi Zhanyou—ji zai kangmei yuanchao zhanchang shang fushan he xisheng de ji wei shaoniancun tongxue 憶戰友————記在抗美援朝戰場上負傷和犧牲的幾位少年村同學 [In Memory of Comrades-in-arms—Remembering Several Boystown Students Who were Injured or Sacrificed on the Battlefield of the War to Resist America and Aid Korea]," in *Xue di hongqi fei hou*, 92.

Gun-Chun's tragic fate illustrates how the PLAN China Branch's strategy of cultivating global intimacy to ameliorate global politics eventually crumbled against the hard realities of war. At the time he left Shanghai Boystown, Gun-chun was, by all appearances, an adoption plan success story. He had received food, shelter, and an education through the support of his American foster parents, with whom he had built a mutually affectionate relationship. And he left Boystown ready to become a self-sufficient young man through a career in military service. Nevertheless, within two years of leaving the adoption plan, he was engaged in a vicious battle with the compatriots of his foster parents that would leave him dead, laid to rest in an unmarked gravesite in an unfamiliar land. To the Macauleys, Gun-chun was a "foster son," but to the American warplanes dropping napalm bombs over Korea, he was still simply "the enemy."

By the time Gun-chun met his fate in Korea, the PLAN China Branch had already been shuttered. The officially stated reason for closing the PLAN China Branch in December 1950 stemmed from a dispute regarding whether PLAN funds could be subject to the approval of the People's Relief Administration of China. As part of a broader reorganization of the China Welfare Fund in 1950, the organization's new regulations stated that "all money and goods donated by international friends must receive the approval of the PRAC before they can be accepted and used."[503] On October 11, 1950, Tannebaum wrote to Edna Blue in New York to explain this new policy: "The reason for this…is that a national plan on relief and welfare is being developed and it is their intention to muster all possible aid to effecting this plan." Tannebaum added that he had met with PRAC vice secretary Dong Biwu, and he assured Blue that there was "no question" that the PRAC "clearly understand our operation in China, and are

[503] "Zhongguo fuli hui zhangcheng (cao an) 中國福利會章程 (草案) [China Welfare Institute Regulations (Draft)]," C45-1-12-4, *SMA*.

in agreement with allowing us to function."[504] Nevertheless, on November 2, 1950, the PLAN General Committee decided that requiring funds to be cleared by the PRAC violated the PLAN charter's insistence that it "should be free from any connection with, or allegiance to any group having any political or propagandistic interest of any kind." A motion to immediately terminate PLAN's work in China passed unanimously.[505]

The PLAN China Branch, the CWF, and the PRAC were outraged by PLAN's decision to terminate the China program, which they viewed as PLAN succumbing to domestic pressure not to do anything that might help the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party. Tannebaum wrote to Edna Blue, "The American government is making the breach between the Chinese people and the American people wider and wider…[I]f there is anything you can do to correct it, the American people will be ever appreciative to you."[506] Nevertheless, PLAN headquarters explained in a series of telegrams and letters that it had become "difficult for one to believe that the relief funds can directly benefit the children." In response, the PLAN China Branch reluctantly informed the PRAC that they had no choice but to shutter their operations at the end of the year: "We unanimously felt that this was the inevitable result of the American imperialists' longstanding opposition to the Chinese people."[507] In their capacities as chairman and vice-chairman of the PRAC, Song Qingling and Dong Biwu replied excoriating the

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[504] "Minutes of the Third Meeting for the Year of 1950 of the Corporation of Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, Inc.," November 2, 1950, Box 1, Folder 5, *FPP*.

[505] Molumphy, 104-105.

[506] Quoted in Matthias Messmer, "China's Realities from the Viewpoints of 'Foreign Experts'," in M. Avrum Ehrlich (ed.), *The Jewish-Chinese Nexus: A Meeting of Civilizations* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 25.

[507] Zhongguo fuli hui guanyu meiguo yiyang hui shixiang de chuli yijian xiang jiuji zonghui de baogao 中國福利會關於美國義養會事項的處理意見向救濟總會的報告 [China Welfare Fund's Report to the People's Relief Administration Regarding its Opinions for Handling the Matter of the American Foster Parents Plan], C45-1-27, *SMA*.

termination of PLAN aid to China as politically motivated: "We were extremely indignant to hear of this measure, which is obviously searching for a pretext to treat the Chinese people as an enemy." However, in a separate letter to the CWF, Song Qingling struck a somewhat softer tone, noting that PLAN "always helped the Chinese people in the past."[508]

Song Qingling, Dong Biwu, and the PLAN China Branch were probably justified in viewing PLAN's stated reason for terminating its China program as "pretext." While subjecting PLAN funds to PRAC approval could be read as violating the letter of the PLAN charter, PLAN frequently coordinated with politicians and government bodies in other contexts. In fact, PLAN's founding mission in 1937 was to provide funding for an effort by the Duchess of Atholl, a prominent Conservative member of the British Parliament who strongly supported the Republicans, to establish hostels for refugee children in Spain. Shortly after closing its China Branch, PLAN began operating in Korea, where "institutions were supported only upon the recommendation of the Korean Ministry of Social Affairs."[509]

Ultimately, the PLAN China Branch's experiment in revolutionary humanitarianism ended because PLAN's New York headquarters would no longer fund what it correctly perceived as a humanitarian program that benefited the Chinese Communist Revolution. At the same time, the other large-scale adoption programs that had continued operating after the Chinese Communist Revolution, including those of the China's Children Fund and the American-Oriental Friendship Association, were also coming under increasing pressure to leave China, albeit for very different reasons.

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[508] Du Shuzhen 杜淑貞 (ed.), *Zhongguo fuli hui zhi* 中國福利會志 [Records of the China Welfare Institute], (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexue Xueyuan Chuabanshe, 2002), 28.

[509] Molumphy, 28-30, 111.

Conclusion

On July 3, 1950, a boy named Da-Chwen at the World Red Swastika Society's Orphanage for Homeless Children in Tianjin wrote a letter to his foster mother Shirley in which he mused on the importance of self-sufficiency:

> Everyone says that only the People's Government can help the people solve their difficulties. It is right to use our own abilities to overcome disaster. Depending on other people is not a fundamental solution. Don't you agree?[510]

It is unclear whether Da-Chwen intended the irony of writing such a letter to the woman who had financially supported him for several years. Regardless, his words were prescient. China's intervention in the Korean War in October 1950 lent new urgency to a campaign to achieve national self-sufficiency in providing for social welfare needs. In this context, Chinese officials, intellectuals, and child welfare workers revived the Marxist argument that humanitarian programs facilitated imperialism in China by rendering China's most vulnerable citizens dependent upon imperialist largesse. Among the most prominent humanitarian programs in China, the adoption plan emerged as a focal point of this critique—with profound consequences for the future of the global humanitarian enterprise in China and across East Asia.

[510] Letter from Da-Chwen, July 3, 1950, Box 46, Folder 38, *FPP*; Case File #C251, Box 47, Folder 43, *FPP*.

CHAPTER IV

The Humanitarian Cloak: The Birth of Cold War Humanitarianism In East Asia

In 1947 Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek donated their former wartime residence—a 100-acre estate consisting of 21 stone buildings in the picturesque hills overlooking the Yangzi river in Chongqing—to serve as the location for an orphanage to be named Chiang Memorial Children's Village (*zhongzheng fu you cun* 中正福幼村).[511] They entrusted the operation of the orphanage to an American Southern Baptist missionary named Dr. J.R. Saunders. In order to raise money, Saunders created the American-Oriental Friendship Association (*zhong mei youyi xiehui* 中美友誼協會; hereinafter "AOFA"), which fundraised for Chiang Memorial Children's Village and other Christian orphanages in China through its own version of the "adoption plan" for international child sponsorship. In one typical fundraising brochure, Saunders encouraged American donors to "adopt" Chinese children and "rear them as your own":

> Through the adoption plan, individuals, families, and groups in the United States and Canada can adopt children in China. They can write to the children they are sponsoring and receive replies; many parents take out adoptions for their children and through correspondence build up a lasting friendship. Our Homes emphasize the Adoption Plan with its possibilities for understanding, goodwill, and mutual benefit to both the child adopted and the child's sponsor.[512]

While the AOFA's adoption plan celebrated affective bonds of friendship and family across national, racial, and cultural lines, such transnational intimacies also became infused with urgent political significance in the context of the Chinese Communist Revolution and the

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[511] Chiangs Donate Wartime Headquarters to Methodist Church to House Orphans, *New York Times*, September 23, 1947; Zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui zhongzheng fu you cun 1950 nian 1 yue baogao shu 中華基督教衛理公會中正福幼村 1950 年 1 月報告書 [January 1950 Report for Chinese Methodist Chiang Memorial Children's Village], 0105-0006-00010-0000-001-000, *CMA*.

[512] "Salient Facts About the Pu Kong Orphanage and Similar Children's Homes in China," AR 551-2, Box 52, Folder 1945-1960, *SBHLA*.

emerging global Cold War. A September 1948 AOFA newsletter asked, "Can you think what will be the danger to Christianity and Democracy if the 15,000,000 orphan children of China are allowed to become Communist? When you say you can do nothing to prevent the spread of Communism, ARE YOU SURE?"[513] The political significance of the adoption plan was also readily apparent to the new Chinese Communist authorities in Chongqing. When the Chongqing Branch of the People's Relief Administration of China (*zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui* 中國人民救濟總會; hereinafter "PRAC") investigated Chiang Memorial Children's Village in 1951, they were appalled to find that children still "carried around pictures and letters from their American parents and from foreign children." Their report framed the effects of the adoption plan in alarmist terms as compromising the political loyalty and even the very Chinese-ness of the children: "They look down upon their own fatherland, lose respect for their own nationality, and despise their fellow compatriots." It quoted one child named Ssu-Chun—who had been "adopted" by a man named John from Marion, Virginia—as telling investigators, "I would rather be an American's dog than a Chinese person."[514]

[513] Newsletter of the American-Oriental Friendship Association, September 10, 1948, Series 4, Box 3, Folder 6, *CLB*.

[514] Zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui zhongzheng fu you cun qingkuang chubu liaojie baogao 中華基督教衛理公會中正福幼村情況初步了解報告 [Preliminary Report on Understanding the Circumstances at the Chinese Methodist Church's Chiang Memorial Children's Village], 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*; Zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui zhongzheng fu you cun 1949 nian juan kuan ren ming dan 中華基督教衛理公會中正福幼村 1949 年捐款人名單 [1949 List of Sponsors for Chinese Methodist Chiang Memorial Children's Village], 105-0006-00007-0000-102-000, *CMA*.

Figure 4.1. Photograph of a boy named Sun at Chiang Memorial Children's Village receiving a letter from his American sponsor and writing a reply. *Asia Calling*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 3.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1951, the PRAC Chongqing Branch waged a campaign to reverse the effects of the adoption plan by getting children to recognize that "the kind of harm the American imperialists' had done to their thinking was even more sinister than physical abuse." The campaign culminated with the children participating in a mass denunciation meeting (*kongsu hui* 控訴會) in which they renounced the intimate ties they had forged with foreigners through the adoption plan. A boy named Er-hsiang, who had been "adopted" by a couple in Perry, Georgia, was among the first to speak:

> "Before I did not know that they had come to poison and deceive us, and I even thought that they had come to give us help and be good to us. Only now do I know that Saunders is an imperialist element. He insulted our dignity and poisoned our character. I truly hate him!"

Shortly thereafter, a boy named Ling-yung, who had been adopted by a man named King See in Manila, the Philippines, also rose to speak: "In the past I listened to the imperialists' rumors and hated the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army. Now I understand that I had drank his poison." One by one, other children followed suit in making their denunciations. After each child spoke, he or she took out the photographs and letters they had saved from their foster parents and tore them up before their classmates and teachers. Er-hsiang's letters from his

foster father Geo, Ling-yung's photograph of his sponsor King See—all ended up with the ripped remains of global intimacy accumulating by the fistful on the ground beneath the children's feet.[515]

The striking image of the children of Chiang Memorial Children's Village ripping their former sponsors' letters and photographs to shreds at a mass denunciation meeting provides one dramatic illustration of the processes through which China systematically dismantled foreign-funded humanitarian institutions during the early 1950s. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, Chinese Communist leaders had endorsed the PLAN China Branch's efforts to utilize the adoption plan to transform children into "people's diplomats" who could secure material and ideological support for the revolution abroad (Chapter Three). However, in the context of the Korean War, the adoption plan instead appeared to have created a sizeable group of children emotionally and economically indebted to China's greatest military and ideological enemy—the United States. Paradoxically, the very aspect of the adoption plan that had made it seem such a promising program for forging a new "revolutionary humanitarianism"—the transnational intimate relationships forged between Chinese children and foreign adults—also made it a dangerous example of how "imperialist humanitarianism" might subvert the revolution from within.

This chapter uses the adoption plan as a lens through which to analyze the dismantling of global humanitarianism in 1950s China. I argue that the uprooting of the humanitarian order in post-revolution China fundamentally reshaped the geopolitics of humanitarianism in East Asia, foreclosing the possibility of a humanitarianism of international solidarity and ushering in a new age of "Cold War humanitarianism." The adoption plan figured centrally in this process.

[515] 105-0006-00007-0000-102-000, *CMA*; 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*.

Focusing particularly on two case studies—the AOFA-funded Chiang Memorial Children's Village in Chongqing and the CCF-supported Canaan Children's Home in Beijing—I trace how children's affective loyalties became a key battleground in the campaign to discredit foreign philanthropy in China. In the context of China's participation in the Korean War and the emerging Cold War, the intimate ties between children and their foreign "foster parents" became potent symbols of how humanitarianism functioned as a "cloak" for imperialist encroachment. Eventually forced to leave China, humanitarian organizations like the CCF and AOFA redistributed aid to East Asian Cold War hotspots such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, where they reimagined the adoption plan as building sentimental bonds between the United States and its Cold War allies. Intimate relations and international relations became deeply intertwined through the practice of humanitarianism in the global Cold War.

"All Honest People": Humanitarianism and International Socialism Before 1950

Debates over humanitarianism in post-revolution China were shaped by the uneasy partnerships forged between humanitarian organizations and international socialist groups during the first half of the twentieth century. Marxist critiques of humanitarianism date back to *The Communist Manifesto*, in which Marx and Engels list humanitarianism as one instance of what they term "bourgeois socialism."[516] According to Marxist logic, humanitarianism reinforced global inequalities by sanding the roughest edges off of imperialism and colonialism. By

[516] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/. Marx and Engels write, "A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society. To this section belongs economists, philanthropists, *humanitarians*, improvers of the working class, organizers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind…They desire the existing state of society, minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements…it requires in reality, that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie." Emphasis added.

providing services like orphanages and famine relief, humanitarians sought to convince natives to associate imperial powers with noble beneficence while ignoring the imperialist exploitation that created the conditions of near-constant humanitarian crisis in the first place. As Sam Moyn has observed, Marx-inspired critiques of how humanitarianism reinforces global social hierarchies remain the "near orthodox view of humanitarianism" among scholars today.[517]

Despite their presumed ideological hostility, humanitarianism and international socialism developed a surprisingly symbiotic relationship as they both grew into globally significant movements during the first half of the twentieth century. During the Russian famine of 1921-1922, Lenin and the Bolsheviks actively courted humanitarian aid.[518] In a dramatic appeal "to all honest people" published in U.S. newspapers, the Russian writer Maxim Gorky declared, "Russia's misfortune offers humanitarians a splendid opportunity to demonstrate the vitality of humanitarianism…I ask all honest European and American people for prompt aid to the Russian people."[519] Despite virulent anti-communism in Europe and the United States during the early 1920s, both the International Committee of the Red Cross and Herbert Hoover's American Relief Administration ("ARA") answered the call—launching what was at the time "the greatest humanitarian aid program in the history of the world, involving dozens of nations and as many charitable organizations."[520] In order to overcome American resistance to donate to Bolshevik Russia, Hoover's ARA helped pioneer the use of photography and film to cultivate sympathy for

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[517] Samuel Moyn, "Theses on Humanitarianism and Human Rights," *Humanity Journal*, September 23, 2016. Available at http://humanityjournal.org/blog/theses-on-humanitarianism-and-human-rights/.

[518] On humanitarian aid during the Russian famine of 1921-122 see Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 189-246.

[519] "Help or Millions Die—Gorky: Reds, Starving, Agree to Free All Americans, Appeal Via Soviets to 'Honest People,' *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 31, 1921, 1.

[520] Cabanes, 240.

the victims of humanitarian crisis.[521] Not only did humanitarian aid during the Russian famine help the Bolsheviks survive a major crisis of their early rule, the famine was also "a major turning point in the emergence of a feeling of international solidarity in response to natural disasters."[522] During the 1930s, the American left became increasingly involved in humanitarian efforts at home and overseas (Chapter Three). In the midst of the Great Depression, photographers such as Dorothea Lange of the Farm Security Administration depicted the suffering of migrant women and children to combat anti-immigrant sentiment and make the moral case for economic relief. At the same time, heart-rending images of child refugees fleeing conflicts in China, Spain, and Germany dramatized the human toll of the rise of fascism.[523] In the Popular Front struggles of the late 1930s, humanitarians and socialists were often closely allied in efforts to combat fascism in Europe and Asia.

After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Chinese causes rapidly ascended to the forefront of the global humanitarian conscience, and China became one of the primary fields for humanitarian-socialist collaborations. In response to the devastation of Chinese industry wrought by the Japanese invasion of coastal China, a group of prominent left-wing figures in China—including New Zealander Rewi Alley; Americans Edgar Snow, Helen Foster Snow, and Ida Pruitt; and the British Ronald Hall—promoted the Chinese Industrial Cooperative Movement (*zhongguo gongye hezuo yundong* 中國工業合作運動) as a way to alleviate poverty and unemployment.[524] Contributions from foreigners and overseas Chinese poured in from at least

[521] Ibid, 216-222.

[522] Ibid, 243.

[523] Briggs, 131-135.

[524] For an overview of the Chinese Industrial Cooperative Movement see Xu, *Shenfen, Zuzhi yu Zhengzhi*, 154-169.

10 countries, totaling approximately US$ 5 million during the course of the war.[525] Thanks in particular to the insistence of Song Qingling and Rewi Alley, a significant portion of funds was directed to the Communist base area at Yan'an. By 1941, the Yan'an base area was home to 41 industrial cooperatives with 1,041 members.[526] In a September 1939 letter to Ronald Hall praising the cooperative movement, Mao Zedong wrote, "the size of its contribution to our struggle is beyond measure."[527]

In addition to the Industrial Cooperatives Movement, Song Qingling's China Defence League also deployed the rhetoric of international solidarity to advocate for humanitarian aid to the Chinese Communist Party. In 1943, the China Defence League published an English-language book called *In Guerilla China* that combined forceful appeals for humanitarian aid to the Communist-controlled "Border Regions" with heroic descriptions of Chinese Communist "guerillas" as "the forces that have bitten deepest into the Japanese Fascist lines."[528] In a February 8, 1944 letter "To American Workers," Song asked them to "openly express their hope that the people fighting Fascism behind the lines of the Japanese invaders are also able to receive a share of supplies befitting of their combat mission."[529]

The most celebrated symbol of humanitarian selflessness in China's WWII was the Canadian Communist medical doctor Norman Bethune. After briefly serving in the Spanish Civil War, Dr. Bethune worked as a medical volunteer in Mao's Eighth Route Army for two

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[525] Nym Wales, *China Builds For Democracy: A Story of Cooperative Industry* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1941), 191; Xu, 163-164.

[526] Xu, 164-165.

[527] Xu, 164.

[528] *In Guerrilla China: Report of the China Defence League* (New York: China Aid Council, 1943), 6.

[529] "Zhi Meiguo gongrenmen 致美國工人們 [To American Workers]," *Song Qingling Xuanji*, 381-383.

years before dying of blood poisoning on November 12, 1939 from a cut on his finger sustained while performing surgery on the battlefield. On December 12, 1939, Mao wrote a memorial titled "In Memory of Norman Bethune" (*jinian bai qiu en* 紀念白求恩) that cemented his heroic status within the Chinese Communist Party.[530] By the early PRC, Dr. Bethune was lionized as the embodiment of the new ideal of "revolutionary humanitarianism" (*geming rendao zhuyi* 革命人道主義). In a December 1952 essay titled, "Learn From Comrade Norman Bethune's Spirit of Revolutionary Humanitarianism," President of the Chinese Medical Association Fu Lianzhang praised Bethune as having "manifested the noble spirit of communism and internationalism."[531] The celebration of Norman Bethune's "revolutionary humanitarianism" provided an ideological and rhetorical framework through which humanitarianism might be incorporated into the emerging social welfare system of the People's Republic of China.

Strange Bedfellows: Christian Humanitarianism in Communist China

Inheriting these global and local histories of fraught cooperation between humanitarian organizations and international socialist movements, the PRC leadership was initially divided over whether and under what conditions China should continue to accept humanitarian aid from abroad. The nature of this divide is well-illustrated by the very different speeches delivered by Chairman of the PRAC Song Qingling and Vice Premier Dong Biwu at the Chinese People's Relief Congress in April 1950. Song forcefully articulated her vision for a new model of

[530] Mao Zedong, "In Memory of Dr. Norman Bethune," December 12, 1939. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_25.htm (accessed: April 21, 2018).

[531] Fu Lianzhang, Xuexi bai qiu en tongzhi de geming rendao zhuyi jingshen—jinian bai qiu en tongzhi shishi shi san zhounian 學習白求恩同志的革命人道主義精神——紀念白求恩同志逝世十三周年 [Learn from Learn From Comrade Norman Bethune's Spirit of Revolutionary Humanitarianism], *Zhonghua yixue zazhi* 中華醫學雜誌 [Chinese Medical Journal], Vol. 38, No. 2 (1952), 1027.

humanitarianism as "people's diplomacy" that could secure much-needed material aid while also forging people-to-people links with "progressive" forces abroad.[532] In contrast, Dong accused the United States in particular of using the "cloak of humanitarianism" (*rendao waiyi* 人道外衣) as cover for a "reactionary political plot" to destroy the revolution. Situating American humanitarianism in the context of the United States' "so-called Asia policy," he quoted U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson as calling relief aid to China "a great opportunity to win back the Chinese people's hearts and strike a blow to the Soviet Union."[533] While Song emphasized how aid from abroad could help the PRC, Dong warned that it could be a Trojan horse undermining the revolution from within.

In the meantime, humanitarian institutions and local officials were already taking the initiative to negotiate how to continue humanitarian work across the ideological battle lines of the emerging Cold War. The efforts of China's Children Fund to carve out a role as an American Christian philanthropy in Communist China are emblematic of this brief but significant moment in which humanitarian organizations sought to integrate their programs into the fabric of the PRC's social welfare system. The CCF has been described as "the most politically conservative" international child welfare organization in the postwar period, deploying its "Christian identity" as a "weapon in the Cold War battle."[534] Nevertheless, characterizing the CCF as a dyed-in-the-wool anticommunist organization fails to account for its

[532] "Zhongguo Fuli jijinhui gongzuo bao gao," 525. For a full discussion of Song's views on humanitarianism in the Chinese Communist Revolution, see Chapter Three.

[533] Dong Biwu 董必武, Xin zhongguo de jiuji fuli shiye—1950 nian 4 yue 26 ri zai zhongguo renmin jiuji daibiao huiyi shang de baogao 新中國的救濟福利事業——一九五零年四月二十六日在中國人民救濟代表會議上的報告 [The Relief and Welfare Undertaking in New China—Report at the Chinese People's Relief Congress on April 26, 1951], *Renmin Ribao*, May 5, 1950, 1.

[534] Fieldston, 10, 83. See also Klein, 96.

concerted efforts throughout 1949-1950 to court the support of Chinese Communist officials and alter its programs to meet Communist demands. The CCF's experiences during this period illustrate both the possibilities and limitations of practicing Christian humanitarianism in the early PRC.

After the Chinese Communist Revolution, the CCF was faced with the delicate task of simultaneously justifying its work in the rapidly polarizing political climates of Mao's China and McCarthy's America. Within China, the CCF used its monthly Chinese-language publication *Blessed Children* to convince Chinese audiences that its humanitarian programs were appropriate for China's new ideological climate. For example, on the front page of the December 1950 issue are two brief articles, "Instructions from Chairman Mao" and the "Pu Kong Orphanage Christian's Pledge," their parallel placement inviting careful comparison. Highlighting the overlap between Maoist ideology and Christian principles, "Mao's Instructions" call for a "spirit of mutual help" and "pursuing a simple lifestyle."[535] Likewise, the "Christian's pledge" adopts a Maoist vocabulary to demand that children "imitate the spirit of Christ in assiduously serving the masses."[536] By very selectively quoting from both Mao and its own Christian tracts, the CCF implied that Communists and Christians held shared principles that could underpin the practice of Christian charity in Communist China.

The CCF also sought to convince Chinese readers that its adoption plan specifically was suitable for the children of new China. To this effect, *Blessed Children* published an article titled "Lessons From Incoming Letters" that attempted to apply a facade of equality to the highly paternalistic relationships between Chinese children and their American benefactors. The article

[535] "Mao Zhuxi xunci 毛主席訓詞 [Instructions from Chairman Mao]," *Fu'er*, No. 32 (Dec 1950), 1.

[536] "Puguangyuan jidutu gongye 普光院基督徒公約 [Pu Kong Orphanage Christian's Pledge]," *Fu'er*, No. 32 (Dec 1950), 1.

reminded CCF children that "many sponsors are groups of ordinary Sunday school children who might even be younger than you all!" It also encouraged children to avoid using formalistic expressions of gratitude such as "please frequently favor me with your instructions" (*qing duo cijiao* 請多賜教), which it dismissed as "social niceties of the old society." Moreover, the article included a Chinese translation of a letter sent by a group of American children in which each had written a "life lesson" to share with their Chinese counterparts. These life lessons focused on uncontroversial values like perseverance ("no matter what happens, never lose faith") and helping others ("Don't laugh at other people, instead you should help them").[537] By selecting this particular letter for translation and publication, the CCF implied that the letters children received through the adoption plan were innocuous missives that might even inculcate them with values that would help them become productive citizens of the PRC.

However, the CCF deployed strikingly different rhetoric when justifying its continued work in the PRC to American audiences. In late 1949, CCF founder Calvitt Clarke penned an article for *China News* entitled "Can We Do Business With Communist China?" His answer was a resounding "yes":

> As for CCF operating Chinese orphanages both within and without Communist China, our concern is the Chinese people and especially the children of China. We ask for the privilege of serving them wherever they desperately need us. Our thinking may differ from the beliefs of Communist officials but we Americans have learned in our country to cooperate with different races and beliefs. A child forms a common bond. And we believe that Christ died for us all, for all the round world."[538]

[537] "Lai xin de jiaoxun 來信的教訓 [The Lessons of Incoming Letters]," *Fu er* 福兒 [Blessed Children], No. 32 (Dec 1950), 9.

[538] J. Calvitt Clarke, "Can we do Business with Communist China," *China News*, 7.2 (Winter 1949-1950), 4.

By invoking universal Christian love as well as the familiar notion that humanitarianism was above politics, the CCF argued that to stop its work in China would amount to punishing innocent children for the sins of their government.

Other *China News* articles implied that the gravest threat facing children in CCF orphanages was not Communist oppression but rather abandonment by their erstwhile American sponsors. The CCF assured donors that Communist officials were permitting its work to continue "without interruption," while also emphasizing that "no funds pass through any government official's hands" and "not one dollar has been lost."[539] In contrast to these measured reassurances about Chinese Communist rule, the CCF harshly criticized those Americans who had recently canceled their adoptions:

> So frequently of late the office receives letters from former contributors stating, 'We have decided to drop the adoption of our Chinese child. We do not want to support any Communist.' In the first place, the child isn't a Communist…In the second place, that child, deserted by the friend he prayed for, is much less apt to become a Communist if he is cared for in our orphanage, where he is taught the same things he was taught before the Communists came, including Christianity, than if he is thrown out into the street.[540]

Dramatizing the life-or-death stakes of Americans dropping their adoptions, Clarke wrote, "Unless there is a marked improvement in income in the next few months I shall have to cable instructions to either turn out a percentage of children in all of our orphanages located in Communist territory or close up some of the orphanages completely. Such a cable will be a death warrant to thousands of children."[541]

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[539] "The World Can't Exist Half Stuffed and Half Starved," *China News*, 7.3 (Spring 1950), 4.

[540] "What About CCF Orphanages in Communist China?" *China News*, 8.1 (Winter 1950-1951), 4.

[541] "Can we do Business with Communist China," 3.

As such articles demonstrate, by 1950 the CCF was increasingly forced to defend itself against accusations that its work benefitted the Communist Party. In response to these allegations, the CCF began developing the argument that its work in China was actually *anti*-Communist because it instilled children with Christianity and love for the United States. In a letter to the State Department's Director for Chinese Affairs Edmund Clubb, Clarke estimated that only one in one hundred letters "shows propaganda or influence upon the child on the part of the Communists." On the other hand, "many" letters were "full of wishes to see America and appreciation for what America has done." The CCF also used children's letters with content favorable to the United States to assuage the worries of State Department officials who came to investigate their office.[542]

The CCF pursued conflicting public relations strategies in different national and linguistic contexts—emphasizing its ability to *strengthen* Communist rule in Chinese publications and its ability to *weaken* Communist control in American publications. This reflected the very different functions of the CCF China office in Guangzhou—tasked with securing continued support from local Communist officials—and the CCF headquarters in Richmond—which was responsible for fundraising among an increasingly anti-Communist American public. As a result, both the CCF's Chinese- and English-language publications presented deliberately oversimplified characterizations of its relationship to Chinese Communism. However, the interactions among CCF employees, local officials, and orphanage children on the ground in China reveal a messier reality marked by negotiation, conflict, and compromise.

[542] Letter from J. Calvitt Clarke to O. Edmund Clubb, November 16, 1950, Box IB21, Folder 16, CCF.

In the months after the revolution, the CCF negotiated with Guangzhou municipal authorities over the conditions under which it could continue operating in China. At the November 15, 1949 meeting of the CCF's China Executive Committee in Guangzhou, Chairman Calvin Lee summarized the initial compromise they reached:

> The People's Liberation Army has not interfered in any way with C.C.F. work and [our] religious program will not be interfered with if it is carried out on a voluntary and not compulsory basis. Orphans have been asked to join in the propaganda work of the P.L.A. but only on a voluntary basis and a few orphans have joined this kind of work on their own free will.[543]

As the CCF had always made religious instruction central to its philanthropic mission, Lee's reassuring language belied a major concession: CCF children and staff would *not* be required to participate in religious activities, and they *would* be permitted to participate in propaganda work for the Communist Party. As a result of this compromise, Communist ideology gradually came to replace Christianity in the instruction offered at CCF orphanages. In February 1950, superintendent Hai Lau Ming of the CCF's Kiu Kwong Orphanage reported, "Compulsory Bible classes have been abolished."[544] By late 1950, children at the CCF-supported Lingnan Industrial School were participating in a variety of explicitly political activities, including welcoming returning soldiers from the People's Liberation Volunteer Army, attending an exhibition on the "Resist America, Aid Korea" movement, and celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party.[545]

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[543] "Minutes of Meeting the China's Children Fund, China Executive Committee — Session 23," November 15, 1949," 17-1-116-137, *GMA*.

[544] "Minutes of Meeting of the China Executive Committee of the China's Children Fund — Session 26," February 21, 1950, 17-1-116-146, *GMA*.

[545] "Yi jiu wu ling niandu xia xueqi lingnan ertong gongyisuo gongzuo zongjie baogao 一九五〇年度下學期嶺南兒童工藝所工作總結報告 [Lingnan Industrial School Summary Work Report for Second Semester 1950]," July 24, 1951, 038-003-19-093, Guangdong Provincial Archives (*GPA*).

The CCF also proved willing to embrace aspects of the Chinese Communists' inchoate pedagogical philosophy. At the July 1950 meeting of the CCF South China District Orphanages Conference (hereinafter, "SCDOC"), a wide range of fundamental changes to the CCF's program were discussed, including "how to implement a democratic style of looking after children," "how to adapt to the religious life of the liberated areas," and issues regarding the writing and translation of children's letters.[546] At an SCDOC study meeting held on December 2, 1950, participants were encouraged to consult a series of reference materials, including a small book titled *Fostering and Educating a New Generation* (*peiyang jiaoyu xin de yi dai* 培養教育新的一代) that argued, "The goal of our education is to raise the new generation to possess correct ideology and revolutionary disposition."[547] At the same time, the book also devoted considerable space to criticizing "extreme" practices, such as struggle sessions that left uncomprehending children in tears and teachers who let student "little cadres" grade their own exams in the name of democracy.[548] While the CCF embraced ideas like "new democracy" and

[546] Founded in May 1946 with Calvin Lee as its Chairperson, the SCDOC was composed of representatives from all CCF-sponsored orphanages in South China and served to coordinate policies and best practices among them. See "Huananqu gu'eryuan lianhehui chengli zhisheng 華南區孤兒院聯合會成立誌盛 [Record of the Founding of the South China District Orphanage Conference]" & "Meihua ertong fulihui huananqu gu'eryuan lianhui zuzhi dagang 美華兒童福利會華南區孤兒院聯會組織大綱 [Outline of the Organization of the China's Children Fund South China District Orphanages Conference], *Fu'er*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1946), 5; "Meihua ertong fulihui huananqu gu'eryuan lianhui di wu jie nianhui 美華兒童福利會華南區孤兒院聯會第五屆年會 [Fifth annual meeting of the South China District Orphanages Conference]," 17-1-120-22, *GMA*. The rather barebones minutes from this meeting do not record the content of their discussions on these matters.

[547] Huanan qu guer yuan lianhehui xuexi jiaoyi hui di er ci xuexi xiang mu 'zenyang shishi minzhu guanli' 華南區孤兒院聯合會學習交誼會第二次學習題目「怎樣實施民主管理」[South China District Orphanages Conference Study Meeting, Topic #2 'How to Implement Democratic Management'], 17-1-120-16, *GMA*; *Peiyang jiaoyu xin de yi dai: di yi ci quanguo shaonian ertong gongzuo ganbu dahui wenxian* 培養教育新的一代：第一次全國少年兒童工作幹部大會文獻 [Fostering and Educating a New Generation: Documents from the First National Conference for Children's Work Cadres], (Beijing: Qingnan Chubanshe, 1950), 2.

[548] *Peiyang jiaoyu xin de yi dai*, 2-3.

"ideological education," these concepts were still very much in flux, and more moderate interpretations compatible with the CCF's own pedagogical practices often still prevailed.

Nevertheless, the CCF's efforts to continue funding orphanages via the adoption plan during the early years of the PRC were not without considerable difficulties. Most pressing was a lack of funds. In November 1949 the CCF's China Office announced that, due to declining fundraising in the United States, the CCF would be cutting all staff salaries and all grants to affiliated orphanages by one-third.[549] While CCF orphanages attempted to make up for decreased funding by increasing children's productive labor, such activities rarely made much of a dent in budget deficits.[550] Furthermore, the high turnover of children made coordinating the adoption plan increasingly difficult. In February 1950 the China Executive Committee decided to send a list of children who had withdrawn to Clarke in Richmond "so he can decide what to do about the sponsors of these children."[551]

Despite these problems, as the year 1950 drew to a close the CCF's adoption plan appeared to all involved to have weathered the tumultuous post-liberation period and carved out a role in early PRC society. In June 1950, Calvin Lee made a tour of several CCF orphanages in South China and reported that they were "running smoothly."[552] On June 26, 1950 the Pu Kong Orphanage sent 327 letters and hand-drawn cards from its children to the CCF office in

[549] "Zhi huananqu ge yuan jianhan 致華南區各院箋函 [Letter to South China District Orphanages]," November 18, 1949, 零 18-44-68, *GMA*.

[550] "Minutes of Meeting of the China Executive Committee of the China's Children Fund — Session 26," February 21, 1950, 17-1-116-146, *GMA*.

[551] "Minutes of Meeting of the China Executive Committee of the China's Children Fund – Session 25," February 3, 1950, 17-1-116-144, *GMA*.

[552] "Minutes of Meeting of the China's Children Fund, China Executive Committee – Session 29," June 29, 1950, 17-1-116-128, *GMA*.

Guangzhou to be forwarded to their foster parents in the United States.[553] These were apparently received in Richmond, where in September 1950 the Executive Committee reported, "our work in China is continuing as usual, without interference from the Communist Government. Much of the Christmas mail from China has already been received."[554] There were also indications that both Americans and Chinese were willing to continue their support for the adoption plan. Clarke remarked at one meeting, "It would appear from the correspondence that the general public throughout America is sympathetic to the needs of the orphan children whom we are helping—regardless of the attitude of the State Department."[555] And on December 13, 1950, a meeting of the teachers, students, and staff of the Lingnan Industrial School voted to continue receiving CCF aid through the adoption plan. As their decision put it, "this is the aid of American friends and does not have any relationship with imperialism."[556]

"A Living Dr. Norman Bethune": Laura Richards and the Canaan Children's Home

In at least one case, Chinese Communist authorities were so impressed with an orphanage funded by the CCF's adoption plan that they offered to transform it into a model of revolutionary humanitarianism. Founded in 1929 by an American Presbyterian missionary named Laura Richards, the Canaan Children's Home in Beijing had been funded by the CCF's adoption plan

[553] "Meihua ertong fulihui puguang guer'yuan gonghan 美華兒童福利會普光孤兒院公函 [China's Children Fund Pu Kong Orphanage Official Letter]," June 26, 1950, 17-1-124-68, *GMA*.

[554] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of China's Children Fund," September 27, 1950, Box IA1, Folder 9, *CCF*.

[555] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of China's Children Fund," February 1, 1950, Box IA1, Folder 9, *CCF*.

[556] 1950 niandu er ci huiyi lu 一九五〇年度二次會議錄 [Minutes of Second Meeting of 1950], 20-3-2-25, *GMA*.

since 1946.[557] Like other CCF orphanages, the Canaan Home coexisted with the new Communist authorities for more than two years after the liberation of Beijing. In fact, in a spring 1950 letter to CCF sponsors, Richards conveyed the impression that the Canaan Home had flourished with the birth of the PRC: "Never before have we had so many teachers;" "Our clothing is now better than it used to be;" "The place in which we now live is quite suitable for our family."[558] However, Richards' optimistic tone masked her tense relationship with the local cadres assigned to monitor the orphanage. Beginning in February 1949, CCP cadres regularly gathered the children at Canaan Home for evening political study sessions in which they were instructed on themes such as "economic exploitation" and "Americans are imperialists."[559] One month later, the Canaan Home moved to the former site of the Peking American School, where three Communist cadres set up a permanent office from which to inspect the orphanage's operations.[560] They interviewed the children one-by-one, probing for evidence of mistreatment or that Richards harbored ill will toward the Communists. At least according to Richards' unpublished memoirs, however, the children remained steadfast in their support of her and refused to renounce their Christian faith.[561]

In the course of their surveillance, the cadres apparently developed a begrudging respect for Richards' work providing for more than 200 orphans. Richards was famously Spartan in her

[557] Becky Cerling Powers, *Laura's Children: The Hidden Story of a Chinese Orphanage* (Vinton: Canaan Home Communications, 2010), 2, 253-255; "Letter written by Florence Logan on Laura Richards' Behalf," January 1947, provided to the author by Becky Powers. I would like to thank Becky Powers for providing me with numerous primary sources regarding Laura Richards and the Canaan Children's Home from her personal collection as well as for illuminating discussions on many aspects of Canaan's history.

[558] Laura Richards, "Canaan Children's Home News Letter," spring 1950, provided to the author by Becky Powers.

[559] Powers, 270-273.

[560] Laura Richards, "Moving from the Dowager's Boat House to the American School," undated, provided to the author by Becky Powers.

[561] "Moving from the Dowager's Boat House to the American School."

living habits. As one child, "Zechariah," later recalled, "She lived the same life as the children, eating carrots, wild vegetables, the leaves and stems of sweet potatoes…The better parts of the food, like the sweet potato plant, she saved for the feeble men and babies."[562] Richards' friend and former colleague Florence Logan remembered that "Laura's way of life gave the Communists no grounds for their usual accusations against foreigners."[563] As Logan put it, "Poverty was her greatest protection, really. They couldn't accuse her of mistreating servants, things like that. She was a servant herself." [564] Like other CCF-sponsored orphanages, the Canaan Home also incorporated "daily labor" into the orphanage's routine, and its publicity materials emphasized the spiritual and physical benefits of performing labor.[565] Finally, Laura Richards was apparently well liked by the neighbors and local community members interviewed by the cadres.[566]

In early 1951, the cadres who had spent two years observing Richards' work at Canaan Children's Home made her an extraordinary offer. They called the entire orphanage together for a meeting and began by generously praising Richards: "She served the Chinese people with all her mind and soul. She gave her life to the cause of the Chinese people. We admire her. We realize that she has no hostility toward the Chinese government. It is our wish to cooperate with her to run this orphanage." And then they offered her a deal. If Richards would discontinue religious education and publicly criticize U.S. imperialism, she could continue running the

[562] Zechariah, "The Memory of Our Dear Mother Laura May Richards," 1988, provided to the author by Becky Powers.

[563] Letter from Florence Logan to Becky Powers, January 28, 1985, provided to the author by Becky Powers.

[564] Becky Cerling Powers, "Interview with Florence Logan, June 3, 1987," provided to the author by Becky Powers.

[565] "Canaan Children's Home News Letter."

[566] Powers, 280.

orphanage and would be honored as a "living Dr. Norman Bethune."[567] The CCP's remarkable willingness to make a CCF-funded orphanage into a model of revolutionary humanitarianism stands as a testament to the real if fleeting possibilities for humanitarian collaboration across Cold War lines.

The moment, however, would soon pass. For the deeply religious Richards, who viewed Canaan Home first and foremost as an endeavor of Christian faith, the Communists' offer was impossible to accept. She went immediately to the British Embassy to request help securing an exit visa and left China to return to the United States via Hong Kong shortly thereafter.[568] Spurned by Richards, the CCP launched an all-out rhetorical assault on the Canaan Home, denouncing it as an imperialist institution in a flurry of newspaper articles, mass denunciation meetings, and propaganda materials. Once imagined as a model of revolutionary humanitarianism, the CCF-funded Canaan Children's Home would instead gain notoriety as a symbol of how humanitarian institutions served as a "cloak" for Western imperialist encroachment.

It is important, then, to avoid reading the virulent anti-communism of humanitarian organizations like the CCF—and the virulent anti-humanitarianism of the CCP—backward into the early years of the PRC. Near the end of 1950, it appeared as if the CCF's flexible approach to dealing with Communist authorities—and the Communists' own moderate approach to humanitarianism—had made it possible for the adoption plan to survive as a global humanitarian

[567] Zechariah, Untitled Memoirs, 2001, provided to the author by Becky Powers. On the uses of Dr. Norman Bethune's legacy in the People's Republic of China, see Christos Lynteris, *The Spirit of Selflessness in Maoist China: Socialist Medicine and the New Man* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[568] Powers, 318-333.

program in Communist China. Within a matter of days, however, the situation would change dramatically.

"Just Short of a Declaration of War": Defunding The Humanitarian Project

The Chinese government's decision to reverse course and systemically cut off foreign funding for philanthropic activities in China originated in the context of reciprocal economic sanctions between the United States and China during the Korean War. In a move the *New York Times* called "just short of a war declaration," on December 16, 1950 the U.S. Government froze all Chinese assets in the United States and barred U.S. ships from calling at Chinese ports.[569] Retaliating in kind, on December 28 Premier Zhou Enlai announced the freezing of all American assets in China, including all public and private American funds in Chinese bank accounts.[570] As the United States was China's largest provider of humanitarian aid, the decision to freeze all American funds immediately threatened the financial viability of the humanitarian project in China. At Chiang Memorial Children's Village, the effects were immediate. By January 3, 1951, less than one week after Zhou's order, a significant portion of its funds had already been

[569] Walter H. Waggoner, "Red China's Assets in U.S. Are Frozen: Washington Takes Unilateral Action—Tightens Ban on Shipping to Mainland," *New York Times*, December 17, 1950, 1.

[570] "Suqing meidi zai zhongguo de jingji he wenhua qinlüe shili 肅清美帝在中國的經濟和文化侵略勢力 [Eliminate the American imperialists' forces of economic and cultural aggression in China], *Renmin ribao*, December 30, 1950, 1; Henry R. Lieberman, "Red China Seizes American Assets: Order Confiscates Property, Freezes Public and Private Funds in Reprisal Move," *New York Times*, December 29, 1950, 1.

frozen.[571] By the end of January, only 3,500 *yuan* remained accessible—enough to maintain the orphanage for only another three months.[572]

Korean War economic sanctions help explain the specific timing of China's decision to begin defunding humanitarian work in December 1950, as well as why U.S.-funded institutions were targeted earliest and most vociferously. Nevertheless, tit-for-tat retaliation for U.S. sanctions was only a proximate reason for targeting foreign philanthropy. More significantly, Chinese officials and intellectuals had come to identify global humanitarianism as an insidious tool of economic exploitation. On December 29, 1950, the famous writer Guo Moruo, in his new capacity as vice-premier of the Government Administration Council, delivered a report titled "Guiding Principles for Dealing with Cultural, Educational, and Relief Institutions as well as Religious Organizations that Accept American Funds."[573] Unanimously approved by the Government Administration Council and published the following day on the front page of the *People's Daily*, Guo's report sketched the historical and ideological logics behind the decision to bar all American philanthropy in China.[574] It was the opening salvo in what would become a widespread campaign to expose the pernicious effects of humanitarianism in China.

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[571] "Zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui fuyoucun 1951nian zhongwen di shi yi ci jilu (baogao fuyoucun zhi yuanqi, chouhua juankuan deng)中華基督教衛理公會福幼村 1951 年中文第十一次記錄（報告福幼村之緣起、籌劃捐款等) [Chinese Methodist Children's Village 1951 Eleventh Chinese Minutes (Reporting on the origins, planning, donations, etc.)]," 01050006000170000051000, *CMA*.

[572] "Zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui zhongzheng fuyoucun 1950 nian 1 yue baogaoshu 中華基督教衛理公會中正福幼村 1950 年 1 月報告書 [Chinese Methodist Chiang Memorial Children's Village January 1950 Written Report]," 010500060001000000001000, *CMA*. Note that this document was incorrectly dated as January 1950 on its title page. It is actually from January 1951.

[573] On Guo Moruo's intellectual biography, see Pu Wang, *The Translatability of Revolution: Guo Moruo and Twentieth-century Chinese Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

[574] "Guanyu chuli jieshou meiguo jintie de wenhua jiaoyu jiuji jiguan ji zongjiao tuanti fangzhen de baogao (guo moruo fuzongli yi jiu wu ling nian shi er yue er shi jiu ri zai zhengwuyuan di liu shi wu ci zhengwu huiyi de baogao, bing jing tong ci huiyi pizhun) 關於處理接受美國津貼的文化教育、救濟機關及宗教團體的方針的報告（郭沫若副總理一九五零年十二月二十九日在政務院第六十五次政務會議的報告，並經同次會議批准) [Report on Guiding principles for dealing with cultural, educational, and relief institutions as well as religious organizations that

Tracing the history of American philanthropy in modern China, Guo's report argued that it was a form of "cultural encroachment" (*wenhua qinlüe* 文化侵略) with the singular purpose to "deceive, corrupt, and instill a slave-like mentality" in the Chinese people to facilitate economic exploitation. Guo located the origins of American cultural encroachment in China with the early twentieth-century Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program that funded Chinese students to study in the United States. He quoted a 1906 memorandum by the President of the University of Illinois, Edmund J. James, arguing for educational assistance to China on the basis that "trade tends to follow moral and spiritual domination far more inevitably than it follows the flag."[575] For Guo, this quote was smoking-gun evidence that the true motive behind such goodwill programs was capitalist exploitation: "This is an imperialist's own most candid and straightforward recognition of the aim of cultural encroachment." Such "cultural encroachment" proliferated rapidly during the period of Nationalist Party rule, when half of all foreign aid to China came from the United States, the largest portion of which was directed to "religious and relief activities," including the funding of more than 200 orphanages. After liberation, Guo contended, these American-funded institutions in China engaged in a variety of tactics to sabotage the revolution, including "spreading rumors, committing libel, engaging in reactionary propaganda…and even going so far as to hide weapons, collaborate with Nationalist special agents, and engage in espionage."[576]

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accept American funds (Vice-Premier Guo Moruo's December 29, 1950 Report at the Sixty-fifth government administration meeting of the Government Administration Council, also approved at the same meeting)] *Renmin Ribao*, December 30, 1950, 1.

[575] Edmund J. James, "Memorandum Concerning the Sending of an Educational Commission to China," Folder IL1, Broadsides and Ephemera Collection, Duke University Libraries Digital Collections.

[576] "Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhengwuyuan guanyu chuli jieshou meiguo jintie de wenhua jiaoyu jiuji jiguan ji zongjiao tuanti fangzhen de jueding 中央人民政府政務院關於處理接受美國津貼的文化教育救濟機關及宗教團體方針的決定 [Central People's Government Government Administration Council Resolution Regarding Guiding

In the wake of Guo's report, a deluge of editorials, essays, and publicity materials echoed his arguments in decrying American aid to China. For example, on December 30, 1950, a front-page editorial in the *People's Daily* titled "Eliminate the American Imperialists' Forces of Economic and Cultural Encroachment in China" deployed evocative metaphors to conceptualize the relationship between humanitarianism and imperialism. "American imperialists use economic encroachment to extract the blood and sweat of the Chinese people, and then they vainly attempt to use a small bit of the blood and sweat they have extracted from the Chinese people to purchase back their loyalty." The editorial then proceeds to liken humanitarians to a certain type of image-conscious robber: "There exists in this world a certain kind of thief. He pillages your property and then afterward gives you back a few unimportant items and asks you to consider him your 'benefactor.' The American imperialists are just this kind of thief." The editorial concludes that of all forms of U.S. encroachment in China, philanthropy was the most "venomous":

> The American imperialists' huge investment in financial aid to China's religious, cultural, and relief enterprises is for the simple purpose of using these methods to strangle the spirits of the Chinese people, cause the Chinese people to mistake enemies for friends, and willingly become their slaves. This is the American imperialists' most venomous encroachment policy.[577]

As many foreign-funded charitable institutions had connections to Protestant and Catholic missions, efforts to delegitimize humanitarian aid to China also overlapped with the Three Selfs Patriotic Movement, which aimed to sever ties between Chinese Christians and foreign missions and bring religion under state control. The concept of the "three selfs"—self-support, self-government, self-propagation (*zi yang* 自養, *zi zhi* 自治, *zi chuan* 自傳)—dates

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principles for dealing with cultural, educational, and relief institutions as well as religious organizations that accept American funds], B1-1-1996-1, *SMA*.

[577] "Suqing meidi zai zhongguo de jingji he wenhua qinlüe shili."

back to mid-nineteenth-century discussions within the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the British Church Missionary Society on how to develop the native church. In the early 1950s, however, Chinese Communist authorities adapted the three selfs idea to appeal to the patriotism of Chinese Christians while encouraging them to confront their historical connections to imperialism. To this effect, a group of left-leaning Christian leaders worked with Zhou Enlai to prepare a "Christian Manifesto" that called for rapidly achieving independence from foreign money and personnel while resolutely opposing imperialism.[578] The director of Chiang Memorial Children's Village, Zhang Junci, was among the first group of 1,527 Chinese Christians who had signed the manifesto as of August 1950.[579]

The chorus of prominent intellectuals and officials who criticized global humanitarian aid to China during the final days of 1950 provided an ideological justification for the economic sanctions that defunded American-supported philanthropic institutions in China. Rooted in a Marxist analysis of how foreign philanthropy made China's most vulnerable citizens dependent on imperialist charity and therefore unwilling to engage in anti-imperialist struggle, their starkly framed critiques presented the dismantling of humanitarianism as a prerequisite for genuine independence. Throughout 1949-1950, local officials had tolerated—and in some cases even enthusiastically embraced—the adoption plan as a useful humanitarian program safe from accusations of imperialist influence. In the fateful year of 1951, the new ideological framework

[578] Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 158-168.

[579] "Fangzhi diguozhuyi liyong jiaohui weihai zhongguo renmin—zhongguo jidujiao jie fabiao xuanyan—di yi pi qianmingzhe yi da yi qian wu bai yu ren—zheng jixu zhengqiu quanguo jidujiao jiaotu qianming 防止帝國主義利用教會危害中國人民——中國基督教界發表宣言——第一批簽名者已達一千五百餘人——正繼續徵求全國基督教教徒簽名 [Guard Against Imperialism Utilizing the Church to Harm the Chinese People—Chinese Christian Circles Publish a Manifesto—The First Group of Signatories has Already Reached More than 1,500—Currently Soliciting Signatures from the Entire Nation's Christians]," *Renmin Ribao*, September 23, 1950, 1, 7-8.

provided by Guo's report would lead to a dramatic reevaluation of the effects of the adoption plan on the children of new China.

"The Crimes of Imperialism Against China's Children"

Over the course of 1951, these high-level critiques of humanitarianism morphed into a mass movement to systematically discredit and dismantle all American-funded humanitarian institutions in China. A January 9, 1951 directive from the East China Military and Administrative Committee instructed, "Without exception, all relief institutions that receive American aid are to be taken over by the local branch of the People's Relief Administration of China according to the regulations of the general office." The directive further emphasized that in addition to taking over operation of American-funded institutions, PRAC officials should "launch anti-American patriotic mass movements, so as not only to break off economic connections to American imperialism, but also to completely sweep away the deceiving influence of imperialism from political thinking."[580]

In the spring, as local branches of the PRAC mobilized to investigate foreign-funded child welfare institutions across China, they publicized horror stories of gross neglect and maltreatment of children—transforming "the crimes of imperialism against China's children" into a national *cause célèbre.* On March 7, the *People's Daily* ran an exposé about the Holy Infant Home for Babies (*sheng ying yuying yuan* 聖嬰育嬰院), operated by Canadian Catholic nuns in Guangzhou, alleging that 2,116 babies had died in the past two years, a death rate of

[580] Huadong junzheng weiyuanhui guanyu zhixing 'Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhengwuyuan guanyu chuli jieshou meiguo jintie de wenhua jiaoyu jiuji jiguan ji zongjiao tuanti fangzhen de jueding' de zhishi 華東軍政委員會關於執行'中央人民政府政務院關於處理接受美國津貼的文化教育救濟機關及宗教團體方針的決定'的 指示 [East China Military and Administrative Committee Directive Regarding the Implementation of the 'Central People's Government Government Administration Council Resolution Regarding Guiding principles for dealing with cultural, educational, and relief institutions as well as religious organizations that accept American funds'], B1-1-1996-10, *SMA*.

94%.[581] Two days later, another exposé made similar charges of gross neglect leading to astronomical death rates at two orphanages run by Catholic nuns in Nanjing.[582] These and similar claims also circulated through materials published and distributed by the PRAC, including two 1951 booklets titled *The Crimes of Imperialism Against China's Children* (*diguo zhuyi canhai zhongguo ertong de zuixing* 帝國主義殘害中國兒童的罪行) and *The Crimes of Imperialism Against China's Children (Continued*) (*diguo zhuyi canhai zhongguo ertong de zuixing xuji* 帝國主義殘害中國兒童的罪行續集).[583] These accusations provoked an emotionally charged nationwide backlash. As of early April, the *People's Daily* had received 112 letters from individuals and groups expressing outrage over the abuse of children at foreign-funded child welfare institutions.[584]

While these scathing indictments helped discredit the humanitarian motives of foreign orphanages, by highlighting only the most shocking instances of abuse, such articles left open the

[581] "Diguo zhuyi 'cishan shiye' zai wo guo zao xia taotian zuixing!—Guangzhou jianada 'sheng ying ying yuan' canhai wo guo ertong—cong jiefang dao muqian siwang yinghai da er qian yu, jiqi quan shimin fennu, yaoqiu zhengfu diaocha chuli 帝國主義 '慈善事業' 在我國造下滔天罪行！——廣州加拿大 '聖嬰嬰院' 殘害我國兒童——從解放到目前死亡嬰孩達二千餘，激起全市人民憤怒，要求政府調查處理 [Imperialist 'Charitable Undertaking' Creates Monstrous Crimes in Our Nation!—Guangzhou's Canadian 'Holy Infant Home for Babies' Cruelly Slaughters Our Nation's Children—From Liberation to the Present the Number of Dead Children Exceed 2,000, Arousing the Anger of All City Residents, Demands for the Government to Investigate]," *Renmin ribao*, March 7, 1951, 1.

[582] Nanjing 'sheng xin ertong yuan,' 'ci'ai yuying yuan' waiji xiunü canhai zhongguo ertong guangda renmin wuxian fennu, zhengfu yi caiqu youxiao cuoshi 南京 '聖心兒童院' 、'慈愛育嬰院' 外籍修女殘害中國兒童廣大人民無限憤怒，政府已採取有效措施 [Foreign Nuns Harm China's Children at Nanjing 'Sacred Heart Home for Children,' 'Benevolent Love Home for Babies,' Boundless Anger Among the Broad Masses, Government has Already Adopted Effective Measures], *Renmin ribao*, March 9, 1951, 3.

[583] Contemporary scholars have called into question the veracity of charges of abuse and neglect at foreign-run child welfare institutions in Shanghai. For instance, Beatrice Leung and William T. Liu argue, "Many of the foreign missionaries' 'crimes' and 'offenses' were fictitious stories and were used to justify deportation proceedings." See Beatrice Leung and William T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001* (Boca Raton: Universal Publishers, 2004), 62.

[584] Duzhe fen fen zhi han ben bao tongchi diguo zhuyi fenzi canhai wo guo ertong zuixing 讀者紛紛致函本報痛斥帝國主義分子殘害我國兒童罪行 [Numerous Readers Send Letter to this Paper Denouncing the Imperialist Elements' Crime of Cruelly Slaughtering Our Nation's Children], *Renmin ribao*, April 6, 1951, 2.

possibility of distinguishing between good and bad humanitarians. If the children at a foreign-funded orphanage were well nourished and kindly treated, was it still guilty of imperialist crimes? As many of the orphanages funded by the adoption plan provided for children's material welfare at comparatively high standards, Communist authorities needed a new line of attack to show that these institutions also inflicted serious harm upon China's children. In this context, the intimate relationships forged between Chinese children and foreign adults via the adoption plan emerged as explosive symbols of how the emotional and psychological damage wrought by dependency on humanitarian aid could be even more dangerous than physical abuse.

The CCF-funded Canaan Children's Home had first come to the attention of Beijing municipal authorities in the summer of 1949, when the students of the Tongzhou Agricultural Association Training Class filed a complaint accusing the Canaan Home of preventing three children from joining their youth study group. In response, the Beijing Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau launched an investigation that would last nearly two months and uncover problems far beyond those raised in the initial complaint. In addition to criticizing Canaan Home for "prohibiting students from joining the study group," the Civil Affairs Bureau's report also lambasted Canaan for its "dark reactionary rule," under which children were not permitted to leave the premises, converse with the opposite sex, or receive family visits; and in which they were coerced into accepting religion.[585] No immediate punishments were inflicted on the Canaan Home, and Laura Richards gradually managed to win over the cadres stationed there for observation. However, after Richards turned down their offer to continue running the orphanage

[585] Beijing shi renmin zhengfu minzheng ju diaocha jia nan gu'er yuan zongjie 北京市人民政府民政局調查迦南孤兒院總結 [Summary of Beijing People's Government Civil Affairs Bureau Investigation of Canaan Orphanage], October 18, 1949, 002-001-00055, Beijing Municipal Archives (hereinafter *BMA*).

as a "living Dr. Norman Bethune," the old accusations against the Canaan Home would come pouring forth again—this time in public.

After Richards' abrupt departure, the PRAC Beijing Branch immediately began preparations for assuming control of Canaan Children's Home, and their investigations revealed the alarming consequences of children's perceived debt to their American benefactors. In early 1951, Wang Tongxun of Fu Jen University inspected Canaan Home and was shocked to find it a world apart, where it was as if the revolution had never occurred: "The children amazingly do not even know who the leader of China is. They ask, how come we do not hear about 'Chairman Chiang' these days?" Even more troubling, Wang found that the children's deep affection for their American patrons had rendered them politically disloyal. When Wang tried to teach the children songs such as "The East Is Red," they resisted and even erased the lyrics from the blackboard when he left the room. As the children explained to him, "Americans saved our lives, so we must repay their kindness." As far as Wang was concerned, the Canaan Home was unassailable evidence of how humanitarianism served American imperialism. He concluded, "Does this not clearly illustrate what American imperialism's so called 'relief' and 'friendship' as well as the 'philanthropic undertakings' they operate in China actually are in the final analysis?"[586]

Others who inspected Canaan Children's Home likewise made explicit the political stakes of the children's intimate ties to the United States. Highlighting the fact that children were given foreign names like "John" (*yue han* 約翰) and "Eve" (*xia wa* 夏娃), one report claimed that the orphanage "made children slowly forget their own parents, their own

[586] Baowei zuguo ke'ai de ertong 保衛祖國可愛的兒童 [Defend the Loveable Children of Our Fatherland], *Renmin ribao*, March 21, 1951, 6.

country."[587] As a consequence, such reports argued, children felt political loyalty to the United States over China. A member of the Beijing YMCA recounted an incident in which an official from the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau asked a child at Canaan, "Is America better, or is China better?" The child responded, "America is better!" The official then asked, "If America and China went to war, whom would you help?" Again, the child answered, "I would help America."[588] Published when China and the United States were, in fact, at war in Korea, the story underscored the life-or-death stakes of children's attachment to the United States.

Figure 4.2 *The Crimes of Imperialism Against China's Children* (Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui, 1951). Published by the PRAC in 1951, the booklet singled out the CCF-funded Canaan's Children Home as an example of the emotional and psychological damage inflicted upon children by dependency on humanitarian aid.

[587] Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui beijing shi fenhui jieguan mei zi banli de san ge 'jiuji jiguan' 中國人民救濟總會北京市分會接管美資辦理的三個'救濟機關' [Beijing Branch of the Chinese People's Relief Administration Takes Over Control of Three 'Relief Institutions' Operated with American Capital], *Renmin ribao*, March 29, 1951, 1.

[588] 'Sheng ying ying yuan' deng shijian jiqi guangda qunzhong fennu—ge di renmin yaoqiu zhengfu yancheng xiongshou '聖嬰嬰院' 等事件激起廣大群眾憤怒——各地人民要求政府嚴懲兇手 ['Holy Infant Home for Babies' and other Incidents Arouse Indignation of the Broad Masses—People Across the Country Demand Severe Punishment for the Murderers], *Renmin Ribao*, March 12, 1951, 1.

Even more so than at Canaan Children's Home, the representatives of the PRAC Chongqing Branch sent to investigate Chiang Memorial Children's Village focused almost obsessively on the intimate relationships forged between Chinese children and their American foster parents through the adoption plan. The report they produced described with palpable scorn how the adoption plan worked to "stupefy" (*ma zui* 麻醉) the children:

> Every child is introduced to an "American father," an "American mother," and an "American child" to be its friend…These "foreign fathers and mothers" then use this opportunity to write letters to the children and to send photographs, American picture postcards, pictorials, and all kinds of gifts to stupefy China's children. Through Saunders, the children's life circumstances are also regularly reported to the "foreign fathers and mothers." At that time, each Chinese child would carry around pictures and letters from their American parents and from foreign children.

In "just this way," the report concluded, the adoption plan "harms the thinking of Chinese children and causes them to forget their own fatherland."[589]

The PRAC Chongqing Branch report liberally quoted individual children to demonstrate the psychological damage wrought by their participation in the adoption plan. In addition to Ssu-Chun, who had told investigators he "would rather be an American's dog than a Chinese person," the report quoted another child named Guoqing who said, "I really wish I could turn into a mosquito and fly to America."[590] Comparing themselves to dogs and insects, these children's quotes suggested that the adoption plan debased and even dehumanized children by alienating them from their Chinese identity. Echoing accounts of the Canaan Children's Home, the report added that the adoption plan also caused children to "adopt a hostile attitude to the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army." If the former superintendent of Chiang Memorial Children's Village, J.R. Saunders, could have seen this report about the children who

[589] 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*.

[590] 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*.

were formerly his charges, he doubtlessly would have felt very gratified. AOFA publications had often asserted that the adoption plan would hinder the development of communism in China by securing children's loyalty to the United States. One pamphlet claimed, "Your contribution will go far towards preventing the advent of Communism by more firmly cementing the friendly relations between the people of this country and those of China." Beneath a picture of smiling AOFA-supported children, the pamphlet added, "These children will never forget America."[591] Ironically, the best evidence for these claims would come from the observations of the PRAC Chongqing Branch as it prepared to assume control of the orphanage and purge it of all American influences. Saunders had left Chongqing two years prior, but PRAC officials found that many children still carried around photographs of their American foster parents.[592]

"My Knowledge of American Imperialism": Children's Narratives in the Campaign to Discredit Humanitarianism

These startling findings at Canaan Children's Home and Chiang Memorial Children's Village gained national notoriety as they circulated through letters, newspaper reports, publicity pamphlets, and mass denunciation meetings. Across all these media, the firsthand testimony of children who received aid from abroad emerged as a privileged form of evidence in the campaign to discredit global humanitarian work in China. To be sure, like "speak bitterness" sessions and other uses of personal narrative in public discourse in the PRC, children's testimonials were highly generic and only accessible to broader publics through the mediation of the newspaper editors who published their letters and the local officials who solicited their

[591] "I'm Wondering," Box 267, Folder 1896 (Records of the American-Oriental Friendship Association), Missionary Pamphlet Collection, Yale Divinity Library Special Collections (*AOFA*).

[592] 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*.

participation in denunciation meetings.[593] Nevertheless, the broad circulation of children's narratives reveals how the emotional loyalties of children became a key battleground in the campaign to uproot the humanitarian project in China.

On March 21, 1951, the *People's Daily* published a letter from a boy named Enguang who had lived at Canaan Children's Home for more than ten years before entering a vocational school attached to Yenching University. Enguang's letter made the explosive and true allegations that Laura Richards' husband, Nie Shouguang, who handled the orphanage's administration and finances, had raped two female children in addition to embezzling orphanage funds.[594] While these were certainly the most shocking and damning accusations, Enguang's criticisms of Canaan Home were not limited to the physical abuse of children. Framing his personal observations in the stock phrases that had begun circulating in condemnations of humanitarian institutions, he added, "The American imperialist elements not only abuse them, they also provide them with an education of enslavement that causes them to forget their own fatherland."[595] Enguang's letter spoke to how foreign humanitarian institutions endangered both the bodies and minds of Chinese children.

The Canaan Children's Home also played a significant role in the PRAC's broader publicity campaign to discredit foreign humanitarian work in China. For example, the PRAC's

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[593] On the practice of "speaking bitterness" (*suku* 訴苦) see, Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[594] "Baowei zuguo ke'ai de ertong." During the early 1940s, Nie Shouguang (聶受光) raped two teenaged girls at the orphanage, embezzled the largest donation in the orphanage's history, and fled to his ancestral home in Anhui province. His crimes were reported to Laura Richards by members of the orphanage staff as well as by one of the victims. Nevertheless, Nie returned to the orphanage in 1944 and remained until 1951. Although Richards apparently never doubted his guilt, she allowed him to stay out of both Christian forgiveness as well as because his political connections were crucial to allowing the orphanage to continue operating in occupied Beijing. She never divorced him nor did she report any of his crimes to government authorities. See Powers, 210-236.

[595] "Defend the Loveable Children of Our Fatherland."

book *The Crimes of Imperialism Against China's Children* included a lengthy section accusing the Canaan Home of seeking to "destroy China's next generation" through "a false ideological education to make children resent their biological parents, resent society, resent their own fatherland, and even forget their fatherland."[596] Emphasizing the children's intimate, familial ties to Americans, the book recorded one child's response when asked to write an essay on the topic "my knowledge of American imperialism." Refusing the assignment altogether, the child retorted, "We were brought up by Americans. Mother Richards was an American, how could I write such a thing?"[597]

Orphanages supported by the adoption plan were also prominently targeted through the mass denunciation meetings that were frequent spectacles of the Three Selfs Patriotic Movement and the campaign to eliminate foreign-funded philanthropy in China. Chiang Memorial Children's Village gained nationwide notoriety in April 1951 at the Meeting for Dealing with Christian Organizations that Accept American Funds in Beijing. Attended by 151 delegates representing Christian organizations from across China, the meeting aimed to "completely sever all relations between Chinese Christianity and American imperialism."[598] After three days of speeches and small group discussions, the floor was opened for "indignant denunciations" of imperialists and their collaborators within the Chinese Church. Some of the harshest

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[596] *Diguo zhuyi canhai zhongguo ertong de zuixing* 帝國主義殘害中國兒童的罪行 [The Crimes of Imperialism Against China's Children] (Beijing: Renmin Jiuji Zonghui, 1951), 22.

[597] *Diguo zhuyi canhai zhongguo ertong de zuixing*, 25.

[598] "Zhengwuyuan wen jiao weiyuanhui zongjiao shiwuchu zhaoji huiyi—chuli jieshou meiguo jintie de jiudujiao tuanti—lu dingyi fu zhuren haozhao quanguo jidujiao xintu pubian shenru san zi gexin yundong, chedi geduan yu diguo zhuyi de yi qie guanxi 政務院文教委員會宗教事務處召集會議——處理接受美國津貼的基督教團體——陸定一副主任號召全國基督教信徒普遍深入三自革新運動，徹底割斷與帝國主義的一切關係 [The Religion Office of the Government Administration Council Cultural and Education Committee convenes a meeting—Dealing with Christian Organizations that Accept American Funds—Deputy Director Lu Dingyi Calls Upon All Christians Nationwide to Immerse Themselves in the Three Selfs Reform Movement, Completely Cut Off all Relations with Imperialism]," *Renmin Ribao*, April 17, 1951, 1.

denunciations were reserved for a reactionary "guilty of the most heinous crimes"—the Chairman of the Chiang Memorial Children's Village Board of Directors, Bishop W.Y. Chen.[599]

Bishop W.Y. Chen was among the most prominent Chinese Christians in the United States. A March 1944 profile in *Time* magazine referred to Chen as "China's No. 1 Protestant" and dubbed him the "unofficial ambassador of another famed Chinese Methodist, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek."[600] After Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek donated their former wartime residence to serve as the location of Chiang Memorial Children's Village, it was Chen who travelled to New York to present the deed to the President of the Division of Foreign Missions, Bishop Garfield Bromley Oxnam.[601] By April 1951, however, Chen's American celebrity and close connections to the Nationalist government had become his greatest liabilities. At the meeting, the Methodist Bishop of North China, Z.T. Kaung, accused Chen of "calling himself the Bandit Chiang's unofficial ambassador and everywhere asking for 'American aid' in order to serve as [the Americans'] helper in slaughtering the Chinese people."[602]

Even more threatening than Chen's personal ties to the United States were his efforts to forge affective bonds between Americans and Chinese children through his work at Chiang

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[599] "Chuxi chuli jieshou meiguo jintie de jidujiao tuanti huiyi de daibiao kongsu diguo zhuyi liyong zongjiao qinlüe zhongguo—bi fanzi, Chen wenyuan deng yi xiang pi zhe zongjiao waiyi jinxing fandong huodong—daibiao men yizhi yaoqiu renmin zhengfu yancheng zhe xie zhongguo renmin de diren 出席處理接受美國津貼的基督教團體會議的代表控訴帝國主義利用宗教侵略中國——畢範宇和陳文淵等一向披著宗教外衣進行反動活動——代表們一致要求人民政府嚴懲這些中國人民的敵人 [Delegates in Attendance at the Meeting for Dealing with Christian Organizations that Accept American Funds Denounce Imperialists Using Religion to Encroach Upon China—Frank W. Price, W.Y. Chen, and others—As for Those who use the Cloak of Religion to Carry Out Reactionary Activities—Delegates Unanimously Demanded the People's Government Severely Punish Those Enemies of the Chinese People]," *Renmin Ribao*, April 24, 1951, 1.

[600] "Bishop from China," *Time*, Vol. 43, No. 11 (March 13, 1944), 79.

[601] "Chiangs Donate Wartime Headquarters to Methodist Church to House Orphans," *New York Times*, September 23, 1947, 19.

[602] Jiang Changchuan, "Wo kongsu jiudujiao bailei chen wenyuan 我控訴基督教敗類陳文淵 [I denounce Christian Scum Chen Wenyuan]," *Renmin Ribao*, April 25, 1951, 6.

Memorial Children's Village. At the same meeting, Lutheran Pastor Li Muqun also rose to accuse Chen of "using 'donations' from the war criminal Song Meiling and American imperialists…to implement an education of enslavement for China's children." Pastor Li read out loud the accusations against Chiang Memorial Children's Village leveled by a twelve-year-old child at a previous denunciation meeting:

> They often publicize how rich and good America is and talk about poor and bad China is. They often show American movies for us to watch, to see the American kids in the movie eating bread with butter and drinking milk with white sugar. They also show movies shot in Chinese villages or famine areas for us to watch, to see how Chinese kids suffer. It made many of us kids envy and love America and not love our own fatherland. [603]

Again framing the receipt of global humanitarian aid as compromising the national loyalty of Chinese children, Pastor Li lent power and credibility to his denunciation by quoting at length from a child's own personal recollections.

The children of Canaan Children's Home also participated in mass denunciation meetings. On April 28, 1951, more than 20 current and former Canaan children attended a mass denunciation session as part of the Meeting for Dealing With Relief Organizations that Accept American Funds in Beijing. Speaking on their behalf, the young writer of the letter to the editor of the *People's Daily*, Enguang, repeated many of his earlier accusations, reserving especially harsh words for Canaan's American superintendent Laura Richards, a woman he had grown up calling "mamma."[604]

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[603] Li Muqun, "Kongsu mei diguo zhuyi zougou chen wenyuan 控訴美帝國主義走狗陳文淵 [Denounce the American Imperialist Running Dog Chen Wenyuan]," *Renmin Ribao*, April 25, 1951, 6.

[604] Chuxi chuli jieshou meiguo jintie jiuji jiguan huiyi daibiao kongsu diguo zhuyi liyong 'cishan shiye' canhai zhongguo renmin 出席處理接受美國津貼救濟機關會議代表控訴帝國主義利用 '慈善事業' 殘害中國 [Representatives in Attendance at the Meeting for Dealing with Relief Organizations that Accept American Funds Denounce American Imperialism using 'charitable endeavors' to Cruelly Harm the Chinese People], *Renmin Ribao*, May 5, 1951, 3.

Tattered Remains: The Takeover of Canaan Children's Home and Chiang Memorial Children's Village

The on-the-ground investigations of Canaan Children's Home and Chiang Memorial Children's Village—and the national publicity campaigns these inspired—culminated with the formal takeover of the orphanages by local branches of the PRAC. In the process of assuming control of these institutions formerly funded through the adoption plan, the PRAC placed particular emphasis on severing children's affective ties to Americans and rebuilding their emotional bonds with China.

The PRAC Beijing Branch formally took over control of the Canaan Home in March 1951. Contemporary accounts of the takeover narrated the event as simultaneously re-instilling children with proper familial *and* political sentiments. A recurring theme in critiques of the Canaan Home had been that it sought to permanently sever children's relationships to their birth parents, many of whom were still alive. On April 6, 1951, the *People's Daily* published a letter from a woman named Yumei who 14 years earlier had sent her 3-month-old daughter to the Canaan Home due to economic distress after her husband lost his job. After sending her child to the orphanage, Yumei realized that she would never be permitted to take her daughter back. "After my child entered the orphanage," she wrote, "it was just the same as if I had sold her."[605] Yumei's account is consistent with CCF policy as described in internal documents. A February 1946 document outlined CCF policy regarding parents who wanted to resume custody of their children: "For the purposes of nurturing them to become useful adults, all orphans who are accepted by this organization cannot be taken back part way through. If there is a need to take a child back, a guarantor must be responsible for repaying all expenses for the period when the

[605] "Wo he wo de nü'er tuanyuan le—an jia yu mei ganxie zhengfu jieguan 'jianan gu'er yuan' 我和我的女兒團圓了——安賈玉梅感謝政府接管 '迦南孤兒院' [My Daughter and I Reunited—An-Jia Yu-Mei Thanks the Government for Taking Control Over Canaan Orphanage]," *Renmin Ribao*, April 6, 1951, 2.

child was taken in by this organization."[606] Some children apparently greeted their parents' attempts to retake custody with hostility. When her father came to reclaim her, a girl named "Magdalene" was quoted saying to him, "How cheap! Before you didn't support me, and now you want to take me back. Nothing is that easy!"[607] In this context, the PRAC Beijing Branch's takeover of Canaan Home was portrayed as reinscribing children's proper loyalties to family, country, and party. Finally reunited with her daughter after the takeover, Yumei's letter concluded, "If it weren't for the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, my daughter and I never would have been able to reunite."

The PRAC Chongqing Branch likewise viewed its most important task in effecting the takeover of Chiang Memorial Children's Village as severing the transnational intimacies forged through the adoption plan and cultivating children's emotional attachment to new China. On November 15, 1951, the PRAC Chongqing Branch sent a telegram to Superintendent of Chiang Memorial Children's Village, Zhang Junci, announcing that it was dispatching its representative, Sun Litai, to formally assume control of the orphanage. Echoing the language of Guo Moruo's December 1950 report, the telegram justified the takeover by citing how the "education of enslavement" provided at Chiang Memorial Children's Village had turned children into "docile servants of imperialism."[608] Another report detailing specific plans for the takeover invoked the

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[606] "Mei hua ertong fuli hui huanan qu gu'er shenqing jiaoyang jianze 美華兒童福利會華南區孤兒申請教養簡則 [China's Children Fund South China District Regulations for Orphans Applying for Education and Upbringing]," 17-1-121-87, *GMA*.

[607] *Diguo zhuyi canhai zhongguo ertong de zuixing*, 26.

[608] Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui chongqing shi fenhui guanyu zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui zhongzheng fu you cun you ben hui jieban bing pai sun litai wei jieguan daibiao dian 中國人民救濟總會重慶市分會關於中華基督教衛理公會中正福幼村由本會接辦並派孫立太為接管代表代電 [People's Relief Administration of China Chongqing Branch Telegram Regarding our Organization Taking Over Chinese Methodist Chiang Memorial Children's Village and Sending Sun Litai as Representative for the Takeover], November 15, 1951, 0105-0006-00018-0000-001-000, *CMA*.

"cloak" metaphor deployed by Dong Biwu at his speech to the People's Relief Congress in April 1950 and repeated in many critiques of humanitarianism thereafter:

> For the past several years, the American imperialist element Saunders has used the cloak of 'relief aid' to inflict harm on the thinking of China's children that is even more sinister than physical abuse while deeply inculcating the enslaved reactionary ideology of befriending and worshipping America.[609]

By utilizing familiar language from national-level attacks on humanitarianism, the PRAC Chongqing Branch presented its takeover of Chiang Memorial Children's Village as part of a larger, nationwide struggle to reverse the psychological and emotional effects of humanitarianism on China's children.

Having framed the adoption plan as causing to children to "worship" America and "despise" China, the PRAC Chongqing Branch's work could only be considered complete when the children had renounced their ties to their American benefactors and expressed their loyalty to China and the Communist Party. The PRAC Chongqing Branch began their campaign to win back children's affections by educating them on the "Resist America, Aid Korea" movement and organizing other activities designed to "expose the facts of American imperialism's cultural invasion." These initial efforts did not meet with much success. While children expressed outrage at "imperialist" crimes, they did not believe such crimes took place at their own orphanage, where all children ate their fill and wore warm clothes, and they apparently believed the orphanage's relationship with the United States would continue after the takeover. However, on August 20, 1951, representatives from Chiang Memorial Children's Village attended a meeting for American-funded institutions convened by the Southwest District Military and Political Affairs Committee. Upon returning from the meeting, orphanage employee Hu

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[609] Jieban zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui fu you cun baogao 接辦中華基督教衛理公會福幼村報告 [Report on Taking Over Control of Chinese Methodist Children's Village], 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*.

Decheng presided over intensified efforts to reeducate children's emotional loyalties.[610] The successful conclusion of his campaign was marked by the mass denunciation meeting described in the introduction—when the children of Chiang Memorial Children's Village denounced their American sponsors and ripped their letters and photographs to pieces.

The PRAC Chongqing Branch officially took over control of Chiang Memorial Children's Village on November 19, 1951. To mark the occasion, the children and staff organized an elaborate "welcome the takeover" celebration attended by more than 200 people. After speeches by representatives of the PRAC, the women's federation, and local community members, the child Er-hsiang spoke on behalf of the 86 children remaining in the orphanage. We cannot know what he actually felt as he addressed the audience gathered before him, or whether the tattered remains of his foster father Geo's photograph still seared in his memory. But the words he spoke described his and his classmates' emotional state with crystal clarity:

> "We have never been as happy as we are today! We have long desired to return to our fatherland's embrace. Today it really has been achieved. We feel extremely happy in our hearts!"[611]

As far as the PRAC Chongqing Branch was concerned, it was the "happily ever after" punctuating the end of the tale of Chiang Memorial Children's Village.

The Birth of Cold War Humanitarianism in East Asia

After being forced out of China in 1951, humanitarian organizations worked quickly to transfer funds, personnel, and even children from China to the United States' Cold War allies in East Asia. The dramatic transformation of China's Children Fund during the 1950s exemplifies

[610] 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*

[611] 0105-0006-00018-0000-005-000, *CMA*.

how this uprooting of humanitarian organizations from China reshaped the geopolitics of global humanitarianism in East Asia. On February 6, 1951, the Board of Directors renamed the organization "Christian Children's Fund" (retaining the acronym CCF) and began a dramatic global expansion.[612] By 1955, approximately 16,227 children in 24 different countries across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe were enrolled in the CCF's adoption plan. In a testament to the geopolitical significance of East Asia in the early Cold War, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan combined to account for 80% of all children supported.[613] As the CCF reallocated humanitarian aid from China to these new Cold War hotspots, it also reconceptualized the adoption plan as creating emotional and economic ties between Americans and their new Cold War allies.

In early 1951, the CCF moved its overseas headquarters from Guangzhou to Hong Kong and refocused its efforts on the rapidly growing population of Chinese refugees flowing to the British colony. The CCF made concerted efforts to transfer children out of its south China orphanages, and approximately 300 eventually made it to new CCF-funded institutions in Hong Kong.[614] By 1953, the CCF sponsored 2,131 children at 9 orphanages across Hong Kong, many of them recent refugees from China.[615] The CCF also began publicizing its work in Hong Kong as rescuing child refugees from a cruel and incompetent Chinese Communist regime. Heart-rending stories of children left to starve by callous Communist cadres replaced the CCF's earlier reassurances that the Communists were permitting the normal operation of its orphanages.

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[612] "Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of China's Children Fund, Incorporated," February 6, 1951, Box IA1, Folder 10, *CCF*.

[613] "Proposed Budget for 1955," Box IA1, Folder 12, *CCF*.

[614] Tise, 30.

[615] "Proposed Budget for 1953," Box IA1, Folder 11, CCF.

Assistant International Director Edmund Janss offered a tragic tale of what happened to the children who could not be relocated to Hong Kong:

> Reports soon leaked out of Red China that these youngsters had been ousted from CCF Homes by soldiers of the "People's Republic." A heartbreaking letter from one such youngster, Kwang San Sun, was sent to Richmond a few months later: "A soldier gave me a small bag of rice and told me to leave. I asked him, 'But where shall I go?' He snapped at me gruffly, 'Wherever you want!'" The saddest and most poignant part of the letter, however, was the closing, where the child said, "Please, dear friend, remember that I will never forget your kindness. Tell my dear sponsor also that I will never forget his goodness to me, no matter what happens!"[616]

The CCF also circulated pitiful narratives of Chinese children orphaned by Communist cruelty only to be rescued by the adoption plan in Hong Kong. For example, John C. Caldwell's 1957 book *Children of Calamity* relayed the tale of Chan Kak Shing, "a bright and attractive boy now in the CCF Agricultural Settlement in Hong Kong":

> My father owned a little land and a shop in the Poo Yue district of South China. Shortly after the communists came into power he was arrested…He hanged himself in prison, using strips of bedding and blankets which mother had taken to prison for him…My mother died of shock soon after Father's death. I was able to escape to Hong Kong.[617]

In such materials, the CCF rebranded itself as a beacon of hope for the child victims of Chinese Communist oppression.

The CCF also published Chinese-language materials that sought to instill appreciation and gratitude for its work among the local population in Hong Kong. In October 1951, the CCF founded a bimonthly Chinese-language magazine called *Children's Voice* (*tong sheng* 童聲) that detailed the work at CCF orphanages in Hong Kong and included many firsthand testimonials from local children. A December 1951 article titled "What is the Christian Children's Fund?" noted that 55,000 Americans had contributed to the CCF and challenged readers, "Can we not

[616] Janss, 38.

[617] Caldwell, 52.

also be as warmhearted and devoted in fulfilling our duties?"[618] *Children's Voice* also published examples of letters that CCF-supported children sent to their sponsors overseas, such as one letter that began, "My dear friend: It has been several months since I have written a letter to you. I am very sorry. I hope that you are in good health, just like I have wished."[619] By publicizing these letters to a local audience, *Children's Voice* sought to create a sense of intimacy and gratitude toward the United States among the people of Hong Kong.

The ways in which Cold War politics—more so than demonstrated need—came to shape the political geography of humanitarian aid distribution is well-illustrated by the CCF's work in Taiwan. By 1953, the CCF sponsored two orphanages in Taiwan that had enrolled 120 children in the adoption plan.[620] However, as the missionary in charge of establishing the CCF-funded orphanage in Taichung noted, there simply was not much need for its services on the island. "Our big problem is that we are starting an orphanage in a place that is really not in need and for this reason it will take some time…it does not seem right to take children from good homes and put them in an institution just because they are orphans."[621] Why would the CCF put so much effort into implementing its adoption plan in a place where it wasn't needed? The Cold War logic underlying the CCF's expansion into Taiwan is clearly revealed in a pamphlet advertising its work on the island. Entitled "The Most Anti-Communistic Spot in Asia," its cover depicts a Chinese child spooning rice into her mouth above the caption: "Russia did not supply the rice in

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[618] Zhang Ande, "Shenme shi jiudujiao ertong fuli hui 什麼是基督教兒童福利會 [What is the Christian Children's Fund], *Tongsheng* 童聲 [Children's Voice]," No. 2 (Dec. 1951), 1.

[619] "Zhi yi wei waiguo pengyou—gongxi shengdan bing su jinkuang 致一位外國朋友——恭喜聖誕並述近況 [Letter to a Foreign Friend—Christmas Wishes and Descriptions of the Recent Situation]," *Tongsheng*, No. 1 (Oct. 1951), 5.

[620] "Proposed Budget for 1953."

[621] Fisher to Mills, January 5, 1951, Box IB1, Folder 1, *CCF*. See also Fieldston, 84.

this child's bowl, nor did the Communists in China. America supplied it."[622] The message could not be clearer: providing for the needs of Chinese children through CCF would ensure their loyalty to the United States rather than the Soviet Union or the PRC.

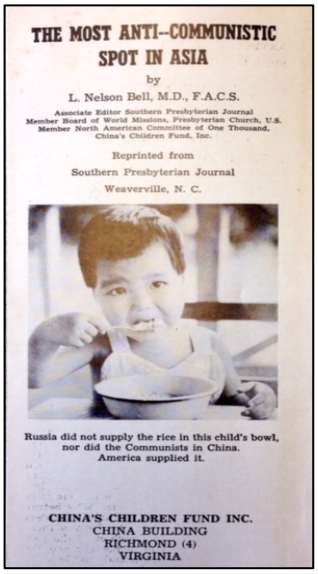

Figure 4.3. "The Most Anti-Communistic Spot in Asia." CCF publicity materials about Taiwan emphasized how the adoption plan could build sentimental ties between Americans and the children of U.S. Cold War allies in East Asia. J. Calvitt Clarke Box 2, *CCF*.

In addition to working with Chinese refugee children in Hong Kong and Taiwan, by the early 1950s the CCF was also devoting a great portion of its resources to Japan and Korea, two of the United States' most important allies in East Asia. By 1953, the CCF supported 1,760 children in Japan through the adoption plan, many of them the abandoned mixed-race children of American soldiers and Japanese women being housed at institutions such as the Elizabeth Saunders Home operated by Sawada Miki (Chapter Two).[623] The incorporation of thousands of mixed-race Japanese children into the adoption plan played a key role in U.S. efforts to

[622] L. Nelson Bell, "The Most Anti-Communistic Spot in Asia," J. Calvitt Clarke Box 2, *CCF*.

[623] "Proposed Budget for 1953"; Tise, 37-38. On Miki Sawada's work with the children of American soldiers and Japanese women, see Elizabeth Anne Hemphill, *The Least of These: Miki Sawada and Her Children* (New York: Weatherhill, 1980).

transform Japan from WWII enemy into Cold War ally. As John Caldwell noted in 1957, the CCF's Japan office handled "some one thousand letters between children and their sponsors plus between three and four hundred gift packages a year."[624] The CCF explicitly connected this flow of money, letters, and gifts between Americans and Japanese children to the overall U.S.-Japan relationship. At a CCF executive committee meeting on July 28, 1952, Overseas Director Verent Mills proclaimed, "The Japanese Government is friendly and favorable to the work being done by CCF."[625] Both publicly and privately, the CCF framed the adoption plan as serving the interests of U.S. foreign policy in Japan.

However, it was South Korea that emerged in the mid-1950s as by far the largest recipient of CCF aid. By the time the Korean Armistice Agreement ended hostilities in the Korean War in July 1953, the CCF was supporting 4,000 children in 23 homes across South Korea. As of 1955, 8,863 Korean children were enrolled in the CCF's adoption plan—approximately 55% of all children enrolled worldwide.[626] While the CCF had long cooperated with U.S. military forces in China and Japan, it developed a particularly close relationship with U.S. forces in Korea. In 1954, the CCF dispatched William Asbury to conduct a detailed survey of Korean orphanages for the U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains.[627] In return, the Army provided large amounts of material aid to CCF programs in Korea. That same year the CCF constructed a new orphanage called the Nam Buk Home with US $26,000 worth of building materials donated by the Army. In fact, financial support from the Army was so important to the CCF's Korea

[624] Caldwell, 73.

[625] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of Christian Children's Fund," July 28, 1952, Box IA1, Folder 11, *CCF*.

[626] "Proposed Budget for 1955," Box IA1, Folder 12, *CCF*.

[627] "Report of the International Director for Christian Children's Fund for 1954," Box IA1, Folder 13, *CCF*.

program that an internal report warned that the withdrawal of a majority of troops in the fall of 1954 meant "a considerable drop in income for many orphanages."[628] When promoting its Korea program in the United States, the CCF again foregrounded anticommunist politics. One typical advertisement, titled "This Picture is as DANGEROUS as it is PITIFUL," displayed an image of an emaciated Korean child beside the warning: "The road to communism is paved with hunger, ignorance, and lack of hope." Implying that "adopting" such starving children would save them from succumbing to communism, the advertisement concluded, "Christian Children's Fund did something about the boy in the picture. It fed him and saved his life and will give him schooling and teach him a trade."[629]

By the mid-1950s, the CCF's adoption plan had enmeshed ordinary Americans and the children of U.S. Cold War allies in a vast web of intimate relationships sustained by the transnational circulation of photographs, gifts, letters, and money. In 1957 it was estimated that the CCF's Korea Office alone handled 50,000 letters between children and their sponsors every year. These connections would endure throughout the Cold War. For example, from 1968-1969 one Korean boy named Yoon Tae sent 18 letters to his sponsor, a man named Jackson who lived in Tuckerton, New Jersey. In letters over the years, Yoon Tae wrote to Jackson, "I miss you very much;" "I think of you every day and pray for you;" and "I love you very much. I am very proud of you."[630] In both tone and content, Yoon Tae's letters echoed those exchanged between CCF sponsors and Chinese children in earlier decades. However, the new transnational circuits along

[628] "Overseas Director's Report for 1954," Box IA1, Folder 13, *CCF*; "Proposed Budget for 1955."

[629] Reproduced in Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 157.

[630] English translation of letters from Yoon Tae to Jackson, November 1, 1968 and August 27, 1968, *CCF*.

which such intimate exchanges took place during the 1950s and 1960s speak to the lasting changes to the geopolitics of humanitarianism wrought by the Chinese Communist Revolution.

Conclusion: A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

The dismantling of the humanitarian project in post-revolution China fundamentally reshaped the politics of global humanitarianism in East Asia—putting an end to once commonplace collaborations between humanitarian organizations and socialist groups and ushering in a new age of Cold War humanitarianism. The adoption plan played a key role in this transformation. For the Chinese Communist authorities, the sentimental ties forged between Chinese children and their foreign foster parents through the adoption plan symbolized how humanitarianism rendered China's most vulnerable citizens emotionally and economically dependent on its ideological and military enemies. And after being forced out of China in 1951, organizations like the CCF reconceptualized the adoption plan as an important way to build affective and material ties between Americans and U.S. Cold War allies in East Asia.

The history of humanitarianism is typically told as a story of global expansion from Euro-American origins, in which the recipients of humanitarian aid in the non-Western world appear only as victims either rescued or forsaken by the Western actors at the center of the story. However, it was the Chinese critics of humanitarianism—from prominent figures like Guo Moruo to the children who ripped up their former foster parents' photographs at mass denunciation meetings—who ultimately forced humanitarian organizations like the CCF to abandon their work in the PRC and remake their programs according to the political geography of the Cold War. For better or worse, the movement that dismantled the humanitarian project in post-revolution China would shape practice of global humanitarianism for decades to come.

Throughout 1949 and 1950 groups like the CCF made significant compromises as they sought to carve out a role for Western humanitarian organizations in Communist China. Beginning in 1951, however, these same organizations would massively redistribute global humanitarian aid for the express purpose of assisting U.S. foreign policy while undermining the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. The Chinese intellectuals who attacked global humanitarianism as a cloak for imperialist encroachment had framed their argument as historical critique. From the perspective of hindsight, however, it was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

CHAPTER V

"Dear Daddy": From People's Diplomacy to International Propaganda

During the early years of the People's Republic of China, many of the older children who had participated in the adoption plan joined the People's Liberation Army, and some soon found themselves fighting the compatriots of their former foster parents on the battlefield in Korea (Chapter Three). Several of their former caretakers joined the fight as well. Zhang Zong'an, the Assistant Director of the PLAN China Branch, second in authority behind only the American Gerald Tannebaum, was among them. During the mid-1940s, Zhang had attended the American-founded Baptist Shanghai University (*Hu Jiang Daxue* 滬江大學), where she also joined the Chinese Communist Party and participated in underground party work. In 1947 she was hired by the China Welfare Fund, serving as Song Qingling's secretary and conducting translation work before her appointment as Assistant Director of the PLAN China Branch. As a Communist Party member who was also well connected within American missionary and philanthropic circles, Zhang had been crucial to the PLAN China Branch's ability to navigate the delicate politics of working with an American humanitarian organization in the midst of the Chinese Communist Revolution. For example, in early 1950, when Song Qingling discovered PLAN's ties to more conservative American relief agencies, it was Zhang in whom she confided. The same qualities that made Zhang so valuable to the PLAN China Branch—her excellent English-language skills, political credibility, and experience working with a wide variety of Americans—would also serve her well in her next line of work.[631]

[631] *Zhongguo fulihui zhi*, 527.

After the PLAN China Branch closed in late 1950, Zhang Zong'an went to work for the Enemy Propaganda Division (*duidi xuanchuan chu* 對敵宣傳處) of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army (*Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun zong zhengzhibu* 中國人民解放軍總政治部). As an "intellectual cadre," she worked with a small team of approximately ten people to create and disseminate propaganda aimed at American and British soldiers in Korea.[632] One of the main forms of propaganda they produced were English-language leaflets—sometimes called "paper bullets"—that were fired out of mortars to shower down on U.S. troops.[633] Frequently utilizing images of distraught children, these leaflets exploited the trauma of family separation to convince soldiers that they were better off surrendering to ensure they returned home to their children alive. At the top of one leaflet was a photograph of a group of American children with the caption, "Where are our Daddies and Brothers?" Beneath it was a cartoon drawing of a rotund man labeled "big business" telling a group of upset children, "Mustn't be sad, kiddies. After all, your daddies and brothers are fighting for a good cause—me."[634] Another leaflet adopted the voice of an American child pleading, "Daddy, Dear Daddy, Come Home to Us Now." It went on to ask, "Aren't you a family man? Haven't you a darling sweetheart and kiddies?"[635] Yet another leaflet exhorted, "Those who love you want you back home, safe and sound. Don't get killed and fill one of these

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[632] Cheng Shaokun and Huang Jiyang, *Meijun Zhanfu—Chaoxian zhanzheng huoxian jishi* 美軍戰俘——朝鮮戰爭火線紀事 [American Prisoners of War—A Record of Facts from the Frontlines of the Korean War], (Beijing: Hua Yi Chubanshe, 2013), 1. In 1952 the Enemy Propaganda Division was incorporated into the newly created "Enemy Army Work Department" (敵軍工作部), which remained under the authority of the PLA's General Political Department.

[633] Cheng and Huang, 5-6.

[634] Cheng and Huang, 2.

[635] "Red 'Dear Daddy' Propaganda Barrage Just Dud to Korea GIs," Feb. 29, 1952, *Newsday*, 2.

permanent graves in Korea."[636] Widely covered in the American press, the Enemy Propaganda Division's leaflets received mixed appraisals from American commentators. An article in the *Baltimore Afro-American* reported that U.S. soldiers saw the leaflets as a "big joke," quoting Sergeant Major Josh Cunningham of Mobile, Alabama as calling one leaflet "a gem" that could not be "any funnier."[637] However, other reports suggested that many U.S. soldiers found the propaganda deeply affecting. Hal Boyle, a prominent Associated Press journalist, reported on the emotional effect such leaflets had on U.S. troops. In one article, he quoted from a letter that an "upset" and "disturbed" soldier wrote to him asking how he should respond to such propaganda: "We realize that enemy propaganda is one of their greatest weapons…But in our position how can we help but believe parts of this?"[638]

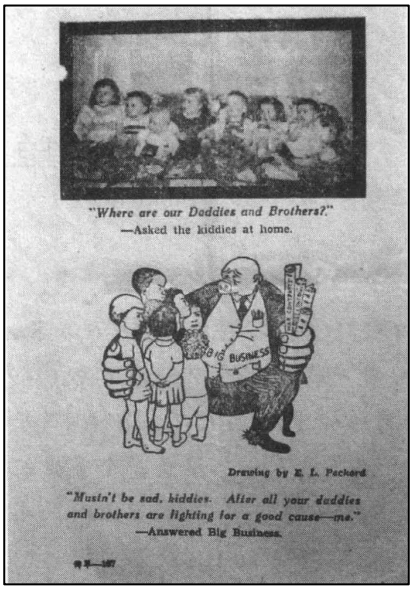

Figure 5.1. A "paper bullet" produced by the PLA's Enemy Propaganda Division and distributed to American and British soldiers during the Korean War. Cheng and Huang, 2.

[636] Cheng and Huang, 4-5.

[637] Bradford Laws, "Chinese Propaganda Big Joke to GI's in Korea," June 30, 1951, *Baltimore Afro-American,* 1.

[638] Hal Boyle, "Communist Leaflets in Korea Designed to Upset GIs: Told to 'Go Home'," April 5, 1951, *Christian Science Monitor*, 6.

The work of the Enemy Propaganda Division drew heavily upon the techniques of "people's diplomacy" pioneered by Zhang Zong'an and her colleagues at humanitarian organizations such as the PLAN China Branch. In some regards, these leaflets were like a distorted mirror image of the adoption plan advertisements that Zhang had helped produce just a couple of years earlier. They deployed images of distraught and pleading children—figured as potential war orphans—to appeal to the familial and humanitarian sentiments of their intended American audiences. Moreover, they sought to mobilize the affective ties between parents and children divided across national and geographic boundaries to shape international opinion of China and its role in the world order. In this case, however, it was the American parents who were in war-torn East Asia, and the kids anxiously awaiting word of them on the other side of the Pacific Ocean were their own children.

Zhang Zong'an's work for the Enemy Propaganda Division offers just one concrete example of how former humanitarian workers in China went on to important careers within the burgeoning field of international propaganda. After the decision to ban all foreign philanthropic aid to China in December 1950, the Chinese and foreign workers who had administered humanitarian programs like the adoption plan were left looking for new ways to leverage their cosmopolitan backgrounds into viable careers while also reaffirming their political loyalties. For many of them, the rapidly growing importance of international propaganda, and the accompanying demand for people with the skills to produce and distribute it, provided the best opportunity to accomplish these goals. Nevertheless, transitioning into international propaganda work required people like Zhang Zong'an to utilize the multicultural knowledge and transnational social networks they had gained from decades in the discredited fields of humanitarian and missionary work to create propaganda that was deeply critical of their former

vocations. There was thus an irony at the heart of Mao-era international propaganda: it relied upon missionary and humanitarian networks to propagate its critique of the missionary and humanitarian enterprises in China.

This chapter traces the roles of former adoption plan administrators in building China's international propaganda capacities during the 1950s and 1960s as a case study to illustrate the crucial importance of missionary and humanitarian networks inherited from the Republican period in the construction of the Mao-era international propaganda industry. In using "propaganda" to translate the Chinese term *xuanchuan* 宣傳, I do not mean to convey—as the English-language word does today—the sense of necessarily biased or misleading information. Rather, I use "propaganda" to translate *xuanchuan* in the way it was understood in Chinese at the time—as publicizing or promoting an organization, institution, or cause. Most producers of international propaganda understood their work as *correcting* biased or misleading information by faithfully "explaining China to the world."[639] I analyze the emergence of China's international propaganda "industry" in the 1950s across three distinct but overlapping fields: enemy propaganda work within the People's Liberation Army, foreign-language print journalism, and the film industry. Veterans of the adoption plan, including virtually the entire high-level staff of the PLAN China Branch, played prominent roles in each of these fields. But perhaps even more striking than the transfer of personnel from humanitarian to propaganda work was the adaptation of humanitarian fundraising strategies for international propaganda purposes. Many of the practices of "people's diplomacy" developed through the adoption plan—the transnational

[639] On the evolving meanings of both the Chinese-language term *xuanchuan* 宣傳 and English-language term "propaganda," see Yao Yao, *Xin Zhongguo Duiwai Xuanchuan Shi: Jiangou Xiandai Zhongguo de Guoji huayuquan* 新中國對外宣傳史：建構現代中國的國際華語權 [History of New China's Overseas Propaganda: Constructing Modern China's Discursive Power in the International Sphere] (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2014), 9-17.

exchange of family letters, the iconography of suffering war orphans, and the utilization of intimate relations in service of international relations—became hallmarks of Mao-period international propaganda. The Korean War had uprooted the humanitarian project from China, but the underlying strategy of fostering global intimacy to influence global politics survived.

In illustrating how the emergence of a large-scale international propaganda industry in 1950s China relied upon inherited humanitarian networks and strategies, this chapter contributes to a critical new body of scholarship that has questioned characterizations of the Mao era as a period of isolation. According to what had long been a master narrative of twentieth-century Chinese history, the Communist revolution abruptly cut off the transnational flows of people, money, and ideas through China until the era of "Reform and Opening Up" commenced in the late 1970s, after Mao's death in 1976. More recently, scholarship has begun to chip away at this periodization from the edges, tracing continuities between the Nationalist and early Communist eras and identifying ways in which China was already beginning to "open up" before Mao's death.[640] Studies of "global Maoism"—the promotion of Mao's particular brand of communism as a model for the third world—have further demonstrated the extent to which China remained engaged with the outside world, albeit on very different terms, throughout the Mao era.[641] Building on this scholarship, this chapter examines the connections between Republican-era global humanitarianism and Mao-era international propaganda to argue that transnational

[640] On the various continuities between Nationalist rule and early CCP rule, including the cultivation of international ties, see the essays in Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz, ed., *Dilemmas of Victory: the Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). For a classic statement of the argument that there were significant continuities between Nationalist and Communist rule across the 1949 divide, see Joseph Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution," *Modern China*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1995), 45-76. For an account that emphasizes the extent to which China had begun opening to the world under Mao in the 1970s, see Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

[641] For example, see Alexander Cook, ed., *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Gregg Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry During the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

networks long considered to have been severed by the Communist revolution were in fact reconstituted across new industries during the 1950s and 1960s—often expanding to achieve a geographic scale and density of exchange unprecedented in Chinese history.

This chapter also engages with the small body of scholarship on the history of Chinese international propaganda. Reflecting Cold War fears of Communist subversion, the earliest studies characterized Mao-era propaganda as insidious but highly effective, probably overestimating the extent of its influence in Western and third-world societies.[642] More recent scholarship has shown the extent of improvisation within major Chinese propaganda organs and questioned whether their efforts significantly influenced international opinion.[643] This chapter departs from this earlier scholarship in two key ways. First, by moving beyond the discursive analysis of propaganda materials to examine how the producers and consumers of propaganda interacted through epistolary exchange, I show that China's international propaganda worked not simply through impersonal encounters with dogmatic texts but also through the cultivation of personal relationships across national, racial, and linguistic lines. Moreover, by surveying the transfer of personnel, material resources, and communications strategies from the humanitarian sector to the propaganda sector, I locate the emergence of China's international propaganda

[642] James W. Markham, *Voices of the Red Giants: Communications in Russia and China* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1967); Evron M. Kirkpatrick, *Target: The World: Communist Propaganda Activities in 1955* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1956) Martha Jane Smith, "Key Symbols in the USSR and Chinese Propaganda to the USA," (PhD Dissertation, New York University, 1958). For a useful overview of scholarly, governmental, and journalistic coverage of Chinese overseas propaganda during the Cold War era see Ungor, 10-20.

[643] Cagdas Ungor, "Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)," (PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2009); Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). On the other hand, Chinese-language scholarship on PRC international propaganda has continued to emphasize its effectiveness both in Europe and the United States as well as across the third world. See, for example, Yao Yao, *Xin Zhongguo Duiwai Xuanchuan Shi: Jiangou Xiandai Zhongguo de Guoji huayuquan* 新中國對外宣傳史：建構現代中國的國際華語權 [History of New China's Overseas Propaganda: Constructing Modern China's Discursive Power in the International Sphere] (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2014).

industry not only within a Cold War context but also within a longer history of Chinese actors cultivating transnational intimate relationships to reshape China's international relationships.

"Enemy Propaganda"

The Chinese "enemy propaganda" tactics that gained international infamy during the Korean War date back to the beginnings of the War of Resistance Against Japan. In his 1937 work "On Guerilla Warfare," Mao placed great emphasis on the importance of propagandizing enemy soldiers: "We further our mission of destroying the enemy by propagandizing his troops, by treating his captured soldiers with consideration, and by caring for those of his wounded who fall into our hands. If we fail in these respects, we strengthen the solidarity of our enemy."[644] The Eighth Route Army also actively utilized Japanese POWs in its own propaganda efforts. Working with Nosaka Sanzō, a founder of the Japanese Communist Party who had been sent to China by the Comintern in 1940, the Eighth Route Army founded the Japanese Workers and Peasants School (*Riben gongnong xuexiao* 日本工農學校), which sought to inculcate Japanese POWs with the idea that Japanese imperialism was the common enemy of the people of China and Japan. Several branch schools were opened across Communist base areas, and by the end of the war more than 1,000 Japanese POWs had "graduated." In addition to the politicized education they provided, the schools focused on winning over reluctant Japanese POWs by fostering emotional bonds with Chinese soldiers. And at least in some cases, their methods seem to have been successful. One Japanese POW recalled that although he had not cried when he left

[644] Mao Zedong, *On Guerilla Warfare*. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/1937/guerrilla-warfare/index.htm.

his family to set out for war, when departing from the Eighth Route Army personnel who had cared for him upon his capture, he "could not stop himself from breaking out in tears."[645]

Once POWs graduated from the Japanese Workers and Peasants Schools, they were utilized in various forms of enemy propaganda work. In December 1939, the Japanese antiwar activist Kaji Wataru, who had escaped to China in 1936, founded the Japanese People's Antiwar Alliance (*Nihonjin Hansen Dōmei* 日本人反戦同盟), which sought to weaken the morale of Japanese soldiers by educating them on the unnecessary cruelty of Japanese militarism in China.[646] Its work was carried out largely by Japanese POWs trained by the Eighth Route Army. Utilizing their language skills, cultural knowledge, and personal networks, Japanese POWs created many forms of propaganda aimed at causing ordinary Japanese soldiers to question the war. For example, they put up Japanese-language posters in occupied territories with phrases such as "Your Family is Desperately Longing to See You Return" and "The Eighth Route Army Does Not Kill Prisoners and Will Treat You Like Brothers." Japanese POWs also shouted propaganda through megaphones and distributed leaflets with Japanese-language messages designed to exploit soldiers' homesickness. For example, in the spring of 1943, Japanese POWs led a "Cherry Blossom offensive" in which they distributed illustrated leaflets and broadcast messages such as, "Far away in your hometown on the sea, the cherry blossoms are in bloom."[647]

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[645] He Libo, "Kangzhan qijian de yan'an riben zhanfu xuexiao 抗戰期間延安日本戰俘學校" [The Yan'an Japanese Prisoners of War School During the War of Resistance Against Japan], *Xiang Chao* 湘潮, No. 11 (2007), 38-44.

[646] Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 34-36.

[647] Wang Mingde, "Bu zhan er qu ren zhi bing—kangzhan shiqi zhonggong de duidi xuanchuan 不戰而屈人之兵——抗戰時期中共的對敵宣傳 " [To Make the Enemy Submit Without Fighting—Chinese Communist Enemy Propaganda During the War of Resistance], *Taizhou shizhuan xuebao* 台州師專學報 [Journal of Taizhou Teachers College], Vol. 19, No. 1 (1997), 54-58.

American commentators wrote quite positively about Chinese propaganda efforts targeted at their common enemy of Japan. For example, after foreign correspondents visited Yan'an in June 1944, the *New York Times* reported on the apparently successful incorporation of Japanese prisoners into the Chinese war effort: "Japanese prisoners here are not held in camps but are impressed with the belief that by helping this army they are helping to liberate Japan from the militarists and the burdens of war."[648] But when the Chinese Communists applied similar tactics to American POWs in Korea, Americans would see it as something else altogether.

By the time the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in July 1953, Chinese propaganda directed at U.S. soldiers in POW camps in North Korea had emerged as one of the most hotly debated international issues of the Korean War. The decision of 21 American POWs to refuse repatriation and remain in Communist China sent shockwaves through American society, in large part because their choice "laid bare that a basic tenant of US imperial warfare vis-à-vis the global order had been challenged: the US was supposed to be the power that transformed the enemy in wartime encounters, not the other way around."[649] As Monica Kim has argued, Americans resolved the cognitive dissonance elicited by the impossible notion that an American soldier would willingly choose Communist slavery over American freedom by appealing to the "specter of 'Oriental' brainwashing."[650] The U.S. Government produced reports arguing that Chinese propaganda techniques constituted a new form of psychological warfare

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[648] "Communist Army in China is Strong: Soldiers in Yenan Area Grow Own Food and Are Armed with Japanese Guns," *New York Times*, July 1, 1944, 6.

[649] Monica Kim, *Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 306-307.

[650] Kim, 305.

that "eschews physical torture and works on feelings with better results."[651] Within popular culture, Virginia Pasley's Pulitzer Prize-winning book *21 Stayed* and the Academy Award-nominated film *The Manchurian Candidate* transformed the brainwashed POW into one of the most potent symbols of the Korean War. In stark contrast, Chinese narratives of the war claimed that American POWs embraced their Chinese captors because of the "humanitarian" treatment they received in POW camps and the moral force of Chinese Communist ideas. In such narratives, the Chinese instructors at American POW camps in North Korea were actually working to *reverse* the brainwashing American soldiers had undergone in the United States. As one article put it, "Among those American prisoners of war who have been educated in the 'American way of life,' rationality has just started to break through the strong biases that have been poured into their heads by the American propaganda machine…and forced them to face reality head on."[652] More recent Chinese scholarship has generally affirmed this narrative. As Cheng Shaokun and Huang Jiyang argued in their 2013 book, "Among the prisoners of war were many who had been captured by the Japanese militarists or the Nazi German Army during World War II and had personally experienced that un-humanitarian, miserable life. But in the POW camps of the Volunteer Army, they instead received an entirely different humanitarian, magnanimous treatment. Comparing the two, they were filled with deep emotions."[653] Was the

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[651] Kim, 312.

[652] "Qin chao meijun shibing putong yanzhan kewang jinsu 'tuichu zhanzheng' meifu xiexin huijia huyu qinyou zhizhi zhanzheng 侵朝美軍士兵普通厭戰渴望盡速'退出戰爭'美俘寫信回家呼籲親友制止戰爭" [The U.S. Soldiers Invading Korea are Generally War-Wear and Desire to 'Withdraw from the War' As Quickly as Possible—American Prisoners of War Write Letters Home Calling on their Relatives and Friends to Stop the War], *Renmin Ribao*, Feb. 16, 1951, 4.

[653] Cheng and Huang, 104. In contrast, much U.S. military historiography has continued to insist that U.S. POWs were cruelly maltreated in Korea. For example, William Clark Latham Jr. wrote of American POWs during the Korean War, [T]heir captors generally treated them with casual brutality while providing no clothing, shelter, or medical care, especially during the first deadly winter of 1950-1951. These depredations…parallel the mistreatment of American POWs by the Japanese in WWII, as well as the abuse of prisoners by both sides during the American

Chinese propaganda directed at U.S. soldiers in Korea an insidious new form of psychological warfare, or simply an accurate reflection of the humanitarian treatment they received?

Although rarely discussed in scholarship on the Korean War, at the heart of this debate was a highly contentious source that both sides claimed as evidence for their competing narratives of the war: the tens of thousands of letters that American POWs in Korea sent to family and friends back home. These letters almost ubiquitously speak to the excellent treatment American soldiers received in Chinese-run POW camps. Within Chinese war narratives, the content of the letters—and the fact that soldiers were permitted to write them—are straightforward evidence of the "People's Volunteer Army's policy of leniency toward prisoners of war."[654] As one *People's Daily* article concisely summarized, "In their letters, the prisoners of war describe the humanitarian treatment they have received and express their desire for a peaceful solution to the Korea problem."[655] On the other hand, in American war narratives these letters constitute part of the "systematic enemy manipulation of POWs for propaganda purposes."[656] The very fact that the letters described positive treatment is interpreted as evidence of the opposite—that they must have been produced under threat of psychological and physical torture. While the truth likely falls somewhere between these two narratives, neither attends to the particular form this propaganda took: the transpacific exchange of letters between captured U.S. soldiers and their loved ones back home. Analyzing how the Enemy Propaganda Division

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Civil War and by British forces during the American revolution." William Clark Latham Jr., *Cold Days in Hell: American POWs in Korea* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012), 4.

[654] Cheng and Huang, 116-123.

[655] "Meiguo fulu zai shengdanjie qian fenfen xie jiaxin—baogao shou wofang kuandai qingxing—bing biaoshikewang heping jiejue chaoxian wenti 美國俘虜在聖誕節前紛紛寫家信——報告受我方寬待情形——並表示渴望和平解決朝鮮問題" [One After Another American Prisoners of War Write Letters Home Before Christmas—Report the Generous Treatment they have Received from US—Express Desire for Peaceful Solution to Korea Problem], *Renmin Ribao*, Dec. 20, 1951, 4.

[656] Latham Jr., 5.

controlled the production and circulation of family letters at Chinese-operated POW camps in North Korea reveals how the practices of people's diplomacy developed through the adoption plan informed China's controversial enemy propaganda efforts during the Korean War.

"Emotional Blackmail"

By late 1951, facilitating the exchange of letters between American POWs and their families had become one of the most important and high profile tasks of the Enemy Propaganda Division. At first, Chinese authorities allowed soldiers to send letters back home through a variety of informal means, such as permitting released prisoners to take batches of letters with them upon their return.[657] However, on December 24, 1951, Chinese, Korean, and U.N. negotiators meeting at Panmunjom agreed to allow the systematic exchange of letters between POWs and their families.[658] Under the agreement, POW camps in North Korea were supplied with stationary, pens, and envelopes, and "mailboxes" were set up throughout the camps for prisoners to deposit their letters. Within the Chinese armistice negotiation team, a five-person "Subcommittee on Prisoner Letters" was established to review (and, presumably, censor) the letters.[659] Chinese negotiators would then hand over batches of letters during negotiation meetings in Panmunjom, after which the letters would be flown by way of Tokyo to Travis Air Force Base near San Francisco before being given to the U.S. postal service for distribution domestically.[660] In just the first few weeks after reaching the agreement, 1,783 letters from

[657] Cheng and Huang, 116-117.

[658] "Truce Negotiators Decide to Allow Letters Between Captives and Families," Dec. 24, 1951, *New York Times*, 1.

[659] Chuang and Huang, 117.

[660] "First P.O.W. Letters from Korea in U.S.: San Francisco Postmaster Speeds 500 to 35 States," Dec. 31, 1951, *New York Herald Tribune*, 4.

American POWs were sent back to the United States. From that point forward, the parents of American soldiers taken captive in Korea generally reported receiving periodic communications from them. In May 1953, the parents of Gilbert Hernandez reported that they had received "four or five letters" from him in the two years since his capture. The father of Steven Ramos received "about 10 letters" from his captured son during the same period.[661] In total, between December 1951 and April 1953, approximately 30,000 letters from American POWs in Korea were received in the United States.[662]

The contents of these letters, many of which were published in local newspapers across the United States, almost uniformly praised the conditions in POW camps and called for an end to the Korean War. A letter from Major Robert J. Farthing to his wife described the excellent treatment he received at the hands of his Chinese captors: "We get three meals a day of the same food received by the Chinese soldiers. Good medical treatment is available, but as yet I luckily haven't needed any. Please don't worry baby, I'm being well taken care of." In other letters, POWs asked their families to take political action against the war. Corporal John L. Tyler wrote:

> "Honey, could you and Mom get together and write our Congressman and have him see what can be done about pulling our troops out of Korea…You should see what our planes have done, torn down practically every building and village and are killing a lot of innocent people, women, and kids…It is awful to see these sights. Don't get me wrong, I'm not turning soft, those are facts I've seen with my own two eyes, and it is wrong. Mr. Truman was wrong when he thinks our boys will die to make him richer along with the rest of his Wall Street warmongers."[663]

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[661] "Prisoner Sons Safe in Korea, Parents Told," May 14, 1953, *Los Angeles Times*, 7.

[662] United States Department of the Army, *U.S. Prisoners of War in the Korean Operation: A Study of Their Treatment and Handling by the North Korean Army and the Chinese Communist Forces* (Fort George G. Meade: Army Security Center, 1954), 481; "Korea Reds 'Ensnare' P.W.s, Says Pentagon," April 13, 1953, *New York Herald Tribune*, 2.

[663] "Letters from American POW's," Nov. 1, 1951, *China Monthly Review*, 251.

Chinese authorities insisted that these letters accurately reflected the feelings of the diverse cross-section of American society represented by the U.S. soldiers captured in Korea. The *China Monthly Review*, a Communist-friendly English-language periodical published in Shanghai claimed, "The countless letters and group statements sent by American GIs is not something that can be dismissed by the American press as 'Communist propaganda.' They are the thoughts and desires of ordinary Americans, from all parts of the US, newly drafted youth and men who have made the army their career."[664] But according to a 1954 U.S. Army report, American POWs were made aware that "unless their letters included material pleasing to the authorities, there would be little chance of their being forwarded." Suggested topics included, "peace requests," "mention of good food, medical care, and gain in weight," and "descriptions of recreational activities, particularly swimming in the Yalu River." Rooted primarily in the testimony of POWs after their return, the report argued, "The conclusion is inescapable that the Communists regarded the POW mail as one more instrument to be utilized to their advantage in the furtherance of both their foreign propaganda and the POW indoctrination campaigns."[665]

Much like the PLAN China Branch had analyzed foster parents' letters to determine whether the adoption plan influenced their views on China, the Enemy Propaganda Division analyzed the letters that POWs received from their families to assess whether their efforts were achieving the desired effect. As with earlier attempts at people's diplomacy, the results were mixed. In the optimistic assessment of Du Ping, the director of the People's Volunteer Army General Political Department, POW letters had "won the sympathies of their families and the

[664] "The Voice of American POW's," May 1, 1951, *China Monthly Review*, 221.

[665] *U.S. Prisoners of War in the Korean Operation*, 491-494, 508.

broad masses of the people."[666] And in fact some American POWs did receive letters from family members conveying their gratitude to the Chinese Army. The father of one American prisoner wrote, "I am so happy to know that you are still alive and that you have been well taken care of. The Chinese allowing you to write letters shows that they are not really like the way they are portrayed here." Chinese camp authorities often took photographs for American POWs to include with their letters, and much like in the adoption plan, these photographs helped communicate an enhanced sense of intimacy and authenticity. The mother of an American prisoner from New York wrote, "I do not know what words to use to express the gratitude I feel to the authorities who are taking care of you and who allow you to correspond with your family members…I am certain that they will treat you in accordance with the Geneva Convention. After your photograph was published in the *New York Times*, I saw the proof." The *Yorkshire Evening Post* reported the reaction of the mother of an English POW in Korea upon receiving his photograph: "I was so happy to see the appearance of my son in the photograph. In the past when he wrote me letters saying that all was well, I never believed them. I thought they were just words of comfort. But from the picture I can see that it is really true, and the strain on my heart has disappeared."[667]

On the other hand, the Enemy Propaganda Division also noted a steady flow of "reactionary" letters designed to poison the minds of American POWs against their Chinese captors. For instance, censors often found letters containing "deceiving propaganda materials" and "reactionary leaflets" as well as "threatening messages warning prisoners not to display any

[666] Du Ping, *Zai zhiyuanjun zongbu* 在志願軍總部 [In the General Political Department of the People's Volunteer Army], (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1989), 371.

[667] Cheng and Huang, 121-123.

enthusiasm in the People's Volunteer Army prisoner of war camps."[668] According to the testimony of Major William E. Mayer, an Army psychiatrist who worked with American POWs upon their return from Korea, the censorship of incoming letters was part of a broader campaign to emotionally alienate prisoners, thereby making them more receptive to Communist propaganda. In particular, Mayer claimed that the Chinese Communists often withheld letters containing positive news and only shared letters relaying negative news, creating the impression that American POWs had been abandoned by their loved ones back home. He testified,

> [W]hen your letters are restricted to letters very often which announce some major or minor domestic crisis, when your letter turns out to be a notice from a collection company, or what a soldier calls a 'Dear John' letter, this isn't the kind of thing you get together with your buddy and talk about. Consequently, men were deprived of this common emotional basis for sticking together.

By selectively withholding and releasing mail depending on its content, the Enemy Propaganda Division emotionally prepared POWs to accept their argument that America's capitalist society "leads to selfishness, grasping, caring only for what is in it for you, little regard for another individual, especially if he is not there."[669]

In order to counter the emotional impact that American POW letters had on their family members, and to ensure that these letters did not provoke backlash against the U.S. war effort, U.S. military officials immediately began a campaign to dismiss their contents as mere propaganda. On December 29, 1951, less than a week after the commencement of the letter-exchange program, U.S. military sources warned the recipients of these letters "not to be

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[668] Cheng and Huang, 119

[669] *Communist Interrogation, Indoctrination and Exploitation of American Military and Civilian Prisoners: Hearings Before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations,* 84th Cong. (1956), 121-122.

surprised if they seem to follow 'the Commie party line'."[670] As the stream of letters from American POWs to their parents, spouses, and children continued throughout the war, U.S. military officials began to frame them not simply as "propaganda," but as an especially insidious form of *emotional* warfare that preyed on the familial sentiments of worried relatives. In January 1953, Arthur F. Kelly, the President of the Air Force Association, called letters from American POWs "a cruel and perverted kind of emotional blackmail directed at one of our most vulnerable targets—the grieving mothers, fathers and wives of American servicemen who have been captured by the Reds in North Korea."[671] An article in *Air Force Magazine* illustrated how this manipulation of family sentiment undermined support for the U.S. war effort: "The overjoyed parents read the letter to their relatives and friends. The local paper ran it in a front-page story. The mother dashed off a note to her Congressman, asking that he do what he could to end 'this senseless slaughter'."[672] In March 1953, the Defense Department issued a statement claiming, "the Communists were playing on the family ties of some American prisoners of war in Korea to turn them into 'tools of the Communist propaganda machine'." According to the statement, the Communists' aim was to "mobilize the pressure of public opinion to bear on the United States Government and the United Nations to accept Communist terms in an armistice in Korea."[673] At least privately, the Enemy Propaganda Division likely would have agreed with this assessment.

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[670] C.B. Allen, "War-Prisoner Mail Following 'Commie' Line: Army Tells Next-of-Kin Letters Can't Get Through Unless They Praise Reds," Dec. 29, 1951, *New York Herald Tribune,* 5.

[671] "GIs' Red Captors Accused of 'Emotional Blackmail'," Jan. 30, 1953, *The Hartford Courant*, 6B.

[672] Quoted in Charles S. Young, *Name, Rank, and Serial Number: Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 151.

[673] "G.I. Families Told to Spurn Red Lure: Washington Warns That Letters of Prisoners in Korea Are Loaded with Propaganda," March 14, 1953, *New York Times*, 2.

As late as November 1950, Zhang Zong'an and the PLAN China Branch had encouraged Chinese children to write letters to their American foster parents explaining how their lives had improved under Chinese Communist rule. Just thirteen months later, she and her colleagues in the Enemy Propaganda Division began systematically encouraging American POWs to write letters to their actual parents explaining how well they were treated by their Chinese Communist captors. As it turned out, the techniques of "people's diplomacy" originally developed for humanitarian fundraising could also be applied as ready-made tools of military propaganda.

Humanitarian Fundraising and International Propaganda

In addition to the highly targeted enemy propaganda work carried out at Chinese-operated POW camps in North Korea, Chinese Communist leaders also vastly expanded their international propaganda work through foreign-language print journalism. From its inception, the CCP had utilized print media to increase its support and prestige abroad. Initially these publications were primarily aimed at the Soviet Union and overseas Chinese workers. In July 1920, Yang Mingchai and Comintern representative Gregory Voitinsky founded the Sino-Russian News Agency (*zhong'e tongxunshe* 中俄通訊社), which sought to enhance Russian support for the Chinese Communist movement by writing and translating articles for Russian newspapers. In the summer of 1922, the Chinese Youth Communist Party in Europe (*lü ou zhongguo shaonian gongchandang* 旅歐中國少年共產黨) founded a monthly publication called *Youth* (*Shaonian* 少年), which was succeeded by a new publication titled *Red Light* (*Chi guang* 赤光) in 1924 under the leadership of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping.[674] Other left-wing

[674] Chen Shihua and Liu Chang, "Zhongguo gongchandang chengli qianhou de duiwai xuanchuan huodong shulun 中國工廠當成立前後的對外宣傳活動述論" [An Analysis of the Chinese Communist Party's Overseas

Chinese-language periodicals with broader readerships soon followed, including the San Francisco-based *Chinese Vanguard* [*Xianfeng bao* 先鋒報] and the Paris-based *Au Secours de la Patrie* [*Jiuguo shibao* 救國時報], all geared toward building support for the Communists among overseas Chinese workers.[675] After embarking on the Long March and establishing its new base area in Yan'an in 1935, the CCP developed ties with sympathetic foreign journalists, including Edgar Snow, Nym Wales, Anna Louise Strong, and Agnes Smedley, who helped propagate a favorable image of the CCP to global audiences. The 1937 publication of Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, in particular, provided an important vehicle for Mao to share his personal story and narrative of the Chinese Communist movement with the wider world.[676]

However, it was the need to attract international aid during WWII that first spurred the CCP and its allies to dedicate significant resources to foreign-language media. In March 1938, already in desperate need of both military and medical supplies, the Politburo resolved to "utilize favorable international conditions to obtain all international aid that is possible and necessary." The Politburo blamed the CCP's failure to attract significant international help on its "weak" international propaganda work and called for "intensifying our efforts to provide all kinds of necessary books, materials, and pictures to newspapers, magazines, and news services in Europe, the United States, and the countries of Asia."[677] In his famous 1938 lectures "On Protracted

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Propaganda Activities Around the Time of Its Founding], Nanjing zhengzhi xueyuan xuebao 南京政治學院學報 [Journal of PLA Nanjing Institute of Politics], Vol. 4, No. 32, (2016), 65-69.

[675] Him Mark Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 70-75; Kristin Mulready-Stone, *Mobilizing Shanghai Youth: CCP Internationalism, GMD Nationalism, and Japanese Collaboration* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 53-54.

[676] Cagdas Ungor, "Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)," (PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2009), 130.

[677] "San yue zhengzhiju huiyi de zongjie—muqian kangzhan xingshi yu ruhe jixu kangzhan he zhengqu kangzhan shengli 三月政治局會議的總結—目前抗戰形勢與如何繼續抗戰和爭取抗戰勝利" [Summary of March Politburo Meeting—The Current Circumstances of the War of Resistance and How to Continue the War of

Warfare," Mao acknowledged, "China's strength alone will not be sufficient, and we shall also have to rely on the support of international forces…[T]his adds to China's tasks in international propaganda and diplomacy." He argued that by "making great efforts to use international propaganda to secure foreign aid," China could shorten the duration of the war.[678] The need to create effective international propaganda in order to secure aid from abroad was again reaffirmed at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee in November 1938, when a resolution was passed to "intensify overseas propaganda…so that our country can receive arms and ammunition, military raw materials, medical materials, technical personnel, and financial assistance from friendly countries."[679]

Song Qingling's China Defence League was among the first organizations to take up the CCP's call to use international propaganda to attract humanitarian aid. In June 1938 the organization founded the English-language *China Defence League Newsletter*, which solicited contributions toward humanitarian work in Communist-controlled regions by praising the CCP's contributions to the overall war effort and criticizing the Nationalists' for denying the CCP access to humanitarian supplies.[680] Published from 1938 to 1941, the newsletter reached a global circulation of 2,500 copies and played an important role in the organization's fundraising

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Resistance to Obtain Victory], March 11, 1938, in Zhongyang Danganguan, *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* 中共中央文件選集 [Selected Documents of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party], Vol. 11 (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 1991), 458-459.

[678] Mao Zedong, "Lun chijiu zhan 論持久戰" [On Protracted Warfare]. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-193805b.htm

[679] "Zhonggong kuoda de liu zhong quanhui zhengzhi jueyi'an 中共擴大的六中全會政治決議案" [Political Resolutions of the Chinese Communist Party Enlarged Sixth Plenary Session], Nov. 6, 1938, in *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji*, Vol. 11, 752.

[680] *Shenfen, Zuzhi yu Zhengzhi*, 186-193.

success.[681] Around the same time, the CCP began producing its first foreign-language publications from Yan'an, including *Report from China*, which was published in English, French, and Russian, and the *Jin Cha Ji Pictorial* (*Jin cha ji huabao* 晉察冀畫報), which included English-language captions and was distributed in the United States, England, the Soviet Union, and Southeast Asia.[682]

After the conclusion of WWII, the CCP continued to promote English-language propaganda publications to attract international sympathy and material aid during its rapidly escalating civil war with the Nationalists. In 1946, Zhou Enlai directed Qiao Guanhua to found the Chinese Communist Party's first foreign-language periodical, *China Weekly News*, which released only three issues before it was shut down by Nationalist authorities. In a testament to the tight connection between international propaganda and humanitarian fundraising, one of the paper's first feature articles introduced the work of Song Qingling's China Welfare Fund.[683] After *China News Weekly* was shuttered, Qiao Guanhua relocated to Hong Kong, where he and his wife Gong Peng (who had been an important liaison between the CCP and foreign diplomats

[681] Yang Ying and Yao Yuan, "Zhongguo waiwen duiwai xuanchuan qikan de lishi kaocha 中國外文對外期刊的歷史考察" [Historical investigation of China's foreign-language overseas propaganda periodicals], *Xianyang shifan xueyuan xuebao* 咸陽師範學院學報 [Journal of Xianyang Normal University], Vol. 21, No. 6 [2006], 98-99.

[682] Guo Fang, "Kangzhan shiqi wo dang wo jun kaizhan guoji xuanchuan de chenggong zuofa 抗戰時期我黨我軍開展國際宣傳的成功做法" [Successful Methods of International Propaganda Developed by Our Party and Our Army During the War of Resistance], *Jundui zhenggong lilun yanjiu* 軍隊政工理論研究 [Theoretical Studies on PLA Political Work], Vol. 16, No. 4 (2015), 50-52.

[683] Xu Yungen, "Zhonggong di yi fen waiwen qikan 'xinhua zhoukan' 中共第一份外文期刊《新華周刊》"[The Chinese Communist Party's First Foreign Language Periodical *New China Weekly*], *Shiji 世紀* [Century], No. 4 (2000), 57; Xu Fenghua, "*Zhongguo jianshe* de chuangban yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan 《中國建設》的創辦與新中國成立初期的對外宣傳" [The Establishment of *China Reconstructs* and Foreign Publicity in the Initial Period of the PRC], *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* 中共黨史研究 [CPC History Studies], No. 5 (2016), 61.

and journalists throughout WWII) founded a new biweekly periodical called *China Digest* that became the CCP's most important English-language publication throughout the civil war.[684]

In the decades before the Chinese revolution of 1949, the CCP and its domestic and international allies had embraced international propaganda as an important means of attracting humanitarian funds from abroad. Nevertheless, their work remained piecemeal and comparatively small-scale. Building on the experience gained from these early publications, after the revolution the CCP greatly expanded its international propaganda activities—and former administrators of humanitarian organizations were at the forefront of its efforts.

China Reconstructs

On December 30, 1950, only two days after Premier Zhou Enlai announced the freezing of all American assets in China, Song Qingling released a statement endorsing the decision. Her support was crucial to the policy's success. After all, Song Qingling's China Welfare Fund, and the many social welfare and relief institutions throughout China that it supported, were among those that would be most adversely affected by the loss of American funds. Nevertheless, Song insisted that the policy was ultimately to the benefit of philanthropic institutions and those who depended on them:

> According to this order, of course, all American relief and welfare institutions in China will be thoroughly invested in and supervised by the People's Government. This is entirely in accordance with the interests of the Chinese people and with the interests of all of the men, women, elderly, and children who have been nurtured by relief aid. In the relief and welfare work that America has carried out in China for more than 100 years, although a certain number of kind-hearted American people did indeed have the desire to help China, objectively they were all used directly or indirectly by American imperialism

[684] Yang and Yao, 99. On Gong Peng's work with foreign diplomats and journalists during and after WWII, see Richard Bernstein, *China 1945: Mao's Revolution and America's Fateful Choice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 110-115.

> for the purposes of covering up aggression, colluding with special agents, numbing the people's will to fight, and buying the people's support.

Directly addressing the "people of relief and welfare circles," Song called upon her colleagues to "enthusiastically support this order of the People's Government" and "publicize and explain" the new policy to the recipients of humanitarian aid. But while Song's statement fully endorsed cutting off humanitarian aid from the United States, she concluded by reiterating the distinction between the friendly American people and the imperialist American government that she had previously used to justify accepting private voluntary aid from the United States. In a strikingly conciliatory note, she asked those who worked in the humanitarian sector to "explain clearly the traditional friendship between the people of China and America and to carry out education in internationalism."[685] Her insistence on the importance of "internationalism" and continued collaboration between Chinese people and their allies within imperialist countries hinted at where she and the broader humanitarian sector in China would devote their energies after international aid was no longer available.

Song wasted little time plotting her next moves. During the summer of 1950, the China Welfare Fund had undergone a thorough reorganization in which it was decided that the organization would expand beyond the provision of relief aid to provide a range of child welfare services on a permanent basis. Renamed the Child Welfare Institute (*Zhongguo fulihui* 中國福利會; hereinafter "CWI"), the organization's new regulations called for "publishing all kinds of propaganda information and materials sufficient to show all of the Chinese people's efforts in

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[685] "Yonghu guanzhi qingcha meiguo caichan dongjie meiguo gongsi cunkuan 擁護管制清查美國財產凍結美國公私存款" [Support the supervision and investigation of American property and the freezing of public and private American accounts], Dec. 30, 1950, *Song Qingling Xuanji Shang Juan*, 588-589. The statement was republished the following day on the front page of the *People's Daily*. "Jiuji zonghui zhuxi song qingling fabiao shengming 救濟總會主席宋慶齡發表聲明" [Chair of the People's Relief Administration Song Qingling Issues a Statement], Dec. 31, 1950, *Renmin Ribao*, 1.

relief work" and "establishing connections with all progressive actors overseas in order to disseminate our organization's propaganda materials."[686] The December 1950 decision to freeze all American funds in China accelerated CWI's shift from soliciting and distributing humanitarian aid to conducting international propaganda work. On December 31, 1950, the day after she released her statement, Song met with Zhou Enlai to discuss founding an "English-language overseas propaganda magazine" under the auspices of the CWI.[687] Zhou signaled his approval, and Song immediately began preparations for creating a magazine. At a meeting held at CWI's Shanghai headquarters on August 31, 1951, it was decided that "the target readers of this bimonthly magazine are progressive actors and free entrepreneurs in capitalist and colonized countries as well as those who sympathize or might sympathize with the people of China. It is especially aimed at those free entrepreneurs and science and art workers who sincerely desire peace but are not progressive politically."[688] They eventually settled on the title *China Reconstructs* (中國建設), as it conveyed both the sense of China reconstructing itself and China helping to reconstruct other societies around the world.[689] After a full year of planning and preparation work, the first issue of *China Reconstructs* was published in January 1952.

The closing of the PLAN China Branch in November 1950 and the founding of *China Reconstructs* just over one year later reveal the extent to which former humanitarian aid administrators were responsible for expanding China's international propaganda capacities.

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[686] C45-1-12-4, *SMA*.

[687] *Zhongguo fulihui zhi,* 28.

[688] Lu Ping, "Wo qinli de *Zhongguo Jianshe* chuangban shimo 我親歷的《中國建設》創辦始末" [The Story of My Experience of the Founding of *China Reconstructs*], *Jinri Zhongguo* 今日中國 [China Today], Vol. 61, No. 2 (Feb. 2012), 39.

[689] Xu Fenghua, "*Zhongguo jianshe* de chuangban yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan 《中國建設》的創辦與新中國成立初期的對外宣傳" [The Establishment of *China Reconstructs* and Foreign Publicity in the Initial Period of the PRC], *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* 中共黨史研究 [CPC History Studies], No. 5 (2016), 62.

Besides Song Qingling, many of the PLAN China Branch's top staff members worked for *China Reconstructs* in various capacities. Gerald Tannebaum participated in planning meetings for *China Reconstructs*, assisted with overseas promotion and distribution, and later also worked on the editorial team.[690] Lu Ping, who had headed the PLAN China Branch's translation department, held a number of important roles at *China Reconstructs* over the years, including office manager and assistant editor-in-chief. Zou Lŭzhi, who had been in charge of the PLAN China Branch's education department, also served as an office manager at *China Reconstructs*, and Lin Debin, who ran the PLAN China Branch's general affairs office, worked in the promotion department.[691] Former superintendents of PLAN-supported institutions, such as Zhao Puchu of Shanghai Boystown and Ren Deyao of the Children's Theatre, contributed articles to the magazine.

In addition to high-level staff from the PLAN China Branch, many of the other key figures in publishing *China Reconstructs* also had backgrounds in transnational philanthropy. Li Dequan, the vice-chairman of the National Association for Refugee Children, and Wu Yaozong, who had worked for the YMCA in China, both served on the editorial board. As the head of the sales promotion department, Song Qingling selected an American named Talitha Gerlach who had worked as a YWCA secretary in China and for the CWF before returning to the United

[690] Lu Ping, "Zai song qingling lingdao xia chuangban *zhongguo jianshe* zazhi 在宋慶齡領導下創辦《中國建設》雜誌" [Founding *China Reconstructs* magazine under the leadership of Song Qingling], *Bai nian chao* 百年潮, No. 4 (2012), 54, 57; "Zhongguo fulihui zhongguo jianshe she guanyu liu tanningbang zai Beijing bangzhu gaigao de baogao 中國福利會中國建設社關於留譚寧邦在北京幫助改稿" [Report on the China Welfare Institute *China Reconstructs* office retaining Tannebaum in Beijing to help with editing manuscripts], Dec. 12, 1962, C45-2-338-21, *SMA*.

[691] "Zai song qingling lingdao xia chuangban *zhongguo jianshe* zazhi," 53. Yan Juanzhen 嚴娟珍 "Bu gai hushi de shige fanyijia zou lŭzhi 不該忽視的詩歌翻譯家鄒綠芷" [The Poetry Translator who should not be overlooked: Zou Lŭzhi], *Mudanjiang Daxue Xuebao* 牡丹江大學學報 [Jornal of Mudanjiang University], Vol. 21, No. 9 (2012), 118.

States to found an aid organization called China Welfare Appeal.[692] Writing personally to Zhou Enlai to obtain permission for Gerlach to return to China, Song explained how Gerlach's career in humanitarianism qualified her for international propaganda work: "First, she has a deep understanding of both China and the United States. Second, because she worked in the YWCA's international department, she has connections in many countries in a variety of different fields, from fundraising work to project management…Over the past decades she has always been a core force inside the China Welfare Fund. She is familiar with the China Welfare Fund's history, and since its founding she has also become a part of that history."[693] Song invited Israel Epstein, a veteran of the China Defence League who had become one of the most prominent foreign champions of the Chinese Communist Party, to serve as editor-in-chief—a post he would hold until his retirement in 1985.[694] These veterans of transnational philanthropy, both Chinese and foreign, possessed the multicultural knowledge to publish an English-language magazine that would appeal to a diverse global audience—as well as the transnational social networks necessary to build a global readership base.

China Reconstructs was an instant success. After initially printing 7,700 copies of its inaugural issue, CWI almost immediately had to print an additional 2,000 copies to meet demand. By the end of its first year of publication, the magazine's circulation had reached 18,000 copies, distributed to an astonishing 107 countries, including 20 countries in Asia, 26 countries in Europe, 28 countries in the Americas, and 28 countries in Africa.[695] Converted to a monthly

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[692] On the life of Talitha Gerlach, see Xiao Gang [肖崗], *Geng Lishu* 耿麗淑 [*Talitha Gerlach*] (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993).

[693] "Zhi Zhou Enlai 致周恩來" [To Zhou Enlai], May 1950, *Song Qingling Shuxin Ji (Xia)*, 287-288.

[694] "Israel Epstein, Prominent Chinese Communist, Dies at 90," *New York Times*, June 2, 2005.

[695] "Zhongguo fulihui zhongguo jianshe she yewubu guanyu zhongguo fulihui yingwen shuangyue kan *Zhongguo jianshe* 1952nian bianji gongzuo de baogao 中國福利會中國建設社業務部關於中國福利會英文雙月刊《中國建

magazine in 1955, by 1956 its circulation had reached approximately 52,000 copies per issue.[696] Articles from *China Reconstructs* were also translated and reprinted in newspapers and magazines across the world.[697] Beginning in 1960, the CWI began publishing *China Reconstructs* in a variety of foreign languages, including Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian, German, and Portuguese—as well as commencing publication of a Chinese edition for domestic circulation.[698] Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, *China Reconstructs* stood out as one of the PRC's most influential international propaganda publications, "especially in the countries of the third world, where it had a broad and deep influence."[699]

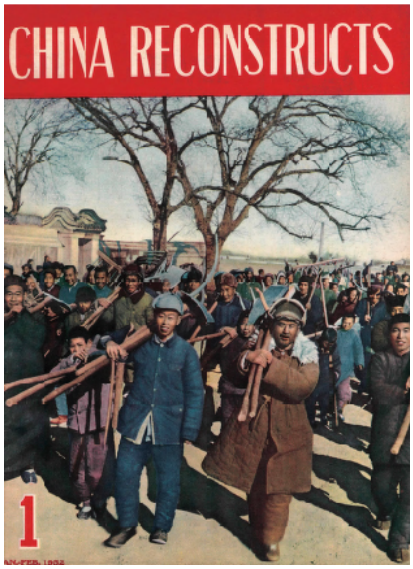

Figure 5.2 The inaugural issue of *China Reconstructs*, published in January 1952. Much of the high-level staff of the PLAN China Branch worked for the magazine, which quickly became one of China's most prominent English-language publications.

設》1952 年編輯工作的報告" [China Welfare Institute China Reconstructs Office Business Department 1952 Report Regarding the Editorial Work of the China Welfare Institute's English Bimonthly Magazine *China Reconstructs*], 1952, C45-2-50-58, *SMA*.

[696] "*Zhongguo jianshe* de chuangban yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan," 64.

[697] "Zhongguo fulihui guanyu zhongguo jianshe jiankuang de jieshao 中國福利會關於中國建設簡況的介紹" [China Welfare Institute Short Introduction on China Reconstructs], 1958, C45-2-213-34, *SMA*.

[698] "*Zhongguo jianshe* de chuangban yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan," 67.

[699] "*Zhongguo jianshe* de chuangban yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan," 59.

The humanitarian backgrounds of its editorial staff were clearly reflected in the content of *China Reconstructs*. One of the main topics throughout the inaugural issue was China's recent decision to cut off all aid from abroad. A feature article on the People's Relief Administration of China re-articulated many of the criticisms of American charity that had been made domestically during the campaign to uproot foreign-funded relief work. It explained, "To attain its own purposes, American imperialism directly or indirectly carried on various 'charities' in China…Obviously, the aim of such manoeuvres was not really to further the welfare of the Chinese people, but rather to smooth the road to U.S. domination over China." At the same time, the article was also careful to reassure readers that this decision had not negatively affected the former recipients of aid. It continued, "In place of the funds which stopped coming from America, PRAC has financed those institutions which have continued to operate, as well as guided them in the improvement of their work."[700] To complement *China Reconstructs*, the CWI also issued other English-language propaganda materials that reproduced for foreign audiences the attacks on orphanages supported by the adoption plan. One English-language booklet titled *Children's Tears* accused foreign-sponsored orphanages in China of having "deceived well-meaning contributors in their home countries who thought that their gifts were really relieving suffering in China." The booklet argued,

> The complete disregard shown by these institutions for the lives and health of the children under their charge are eloquent evidence of the fact that they were founded to serve imperialist aims, with 'charity' as a convenient form rather than a genuine aim. This is confirmed by the fact that those children who did not die of malnutrition or other causes were educated in a spirit of subservience to everything foreign and alienation from their own families and countrymen.

[700] "The People's Relief Administration of China," *China Reconstructs*, No. 1. (Jan.-Feb. 1952), 48.

The booklet included a translated statement by Enguang, a child who had formerly lived in the CCF-supported Canaan Home, in which he claimed that the institution "even tried to poison our minds against our families."[701]

Despite being written, edited, and published by former humanitarian aid administrators, *China Reconstructs* deliberately minimized the extent to which aid from abroad had contributed to the "unprecedented progress of welfare work" for which CWI took credit.[702] To illustrate the vitality of social welfare work in China, the first issue of *China Reconstructs* featured profiles of two of the most prominent institutions to have been supported by the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan: Shanghai Boystown Orphanage and the China Welfare Fund Children's Theatre. In an article titled "Urban Relief and Rehabilitation," Zhao Puchu, the superintendent of Shanghai Boystown, continued the attack on "imperialist relief" that "even in the 'best' cases" caused its recipients to feel "subservience to the very forces whose exploitation of China was responsible for their widespread poverty." Instead he praised the work that institutions like Shanghai Boystown had done in the two years since liberation, which had "kicked the last props from under the moth-eaten slander that China has not the resources to move ahead without imperialist 'advice' or 'philanthropy'."[703] Similarly, an article by Ren Deyao, one of the founders of the Children's Theatre, proclaimed that "since liberation, the Children's Theatre has settled down to become one of the main cultural influences among the children of Shanghai and the whole nation."[704] Neither article mentioned that both of these institutions were funded almost entirely by Americans through the adoption plan, including during the majority of the

[701] *Children's Tears* (Shanghai: Child Welfare Institute, 1952), 3-5, 20.

[702] Song Qingling, "Welfare Work and World Peace," *China Reconstructs*, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1952), 2.

[703] Chao Pu-chu, "Urban Relief and Rehabilitation," *China Reconstructs*, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1952), 28-31.

[704] Jen Teh-yao, "The Children's Own Theatre," *China Reconstructs* No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1942), 35-37.

two-year period that had elapsed since liberation. In its pivot to international propaganda work, the CWI had to minimize the extent to which its proudest accomplishments had depended on the humanitarian aid it now had to disavow.

Nevertheless, the creators of *China Reconstructs* drew deeply upon their experiences conducting "people's diplomacy" in their new international propaganda work. The editorial guidelines that *China Reconstructs* issued to authors reiterated almost verbatim the prescriptions on style and tone that the PLAN China Branch had provided to children writing letters to their foster parents in the adoption plan. For instance, the instructions provided to writers included: "Don't use high-minded language;" "The political nature should not be too strong;" and "Consider the level of receptiveness of foreign readers."[705] With regard to content, writers were instructed to avoid "the original texts of documents and political reports, theory, and articles about politics and the military" and instead focus on concrete examples of the "social, economic, cultural, educational, and relief and social welfare aspects of China's development." As Mao himself commented in 1958, "*China Reconstructs* speaks through facts. This is how overseas propaganda should be done." By eschewing overtly political content and an excessively polemical tone, the editors sought to ensure that *China Reconstructs* could not "easily be mistaken for 'official propaganda' in capitalist countries."[706]

The editors of *China Reconstructs* also relied on the transnational exchange of letters to gauge and influence foreign opinion of China. From the first issue, *China Reconstructs* encouraged its foreign readers to write to the magazine: "If you have questions, write us about them. If you have criticisms or suggestions, let us know. We welcome praise too—but most of

[705] "Wo qinli de *Zhongguo Jianshe* chuangban shimo," 40.

[706] "*Zhongguo jianshe* de chuangban yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan," 61-62, 66.

all we want to know how we may help fill gaps in your knowledge of the fields we cover. That is the way we hope to bring closer the peoples of China and the countries where our readers reside."[707] By the end of the 1950s, the magazine's office was receiving well over 100 letters per month.[708] The editorial staff went to considerable lengths to maintain personal ties with readers by responding quickly to their letters and adjusting the tone and content of articles to suit their tastes. As Lu Ping recalled, "In light of readers' letters, we quickly understood readers' desires and tastes, helping the editors adjust our method of choosing articles and their content. Second, we were able to respond to every letter, and we stipulated that all replies must be written within two weeks."[709] Especially early on, many of the letters that *China Reconstructs* received and circulated internally offered praise and affirmation for the magazine's editorial choices. One reader from Los Angeles wrote a letter that affirmed the decision to avoid overtly political content: "As long as your magazine avoids directly publicizing and praising your country's leaders, I believe that the number of people who take pleasure in your magazine will be very many." A letter from Nottingham, England likewise praised the magazine's ability to foster international understanding: "According to our experience, everyone who has read your magazine all want to continue reading it. The respect and love they have for the magazine increase constantly. We firmly believe that with such a good tool for communication, the understanding and friendship between our two great nations will continue to increase."[710]

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[707] "Introducing, 'China Reconstructs'," *China Reconstructs*, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1952), 1.

[708] "Zhongguo fulihui zhongguo jianshe guowai laixin zongshu 中國福利會中國建設國外來信綜述" [China Welfare Institute China Reconstructs Comprehensive Survey of Letters from Abroad], 1960, C45-2-298, *SMA*. For example, the *China Reconstructs* office received 400 letters in the three-month period of January-March 1960.

[709] "Wo qinli de *Zhongguo Jianshe* chuangban shimo," 40.

[710] C45-2-50-58, *SMA*.

The high volume of reader letters allowed the *China Reconstructs* staff to carry out a project they had initially conceptualized at the PLAN China Branch. In June 1950, the PLAN China Branch had launched an ambitious project to create a comprehensive catalog of "sponsor information records." The plan was to comb through sponsors' letters to compile information about their "class status, family situation, economic situation, profession, faith, etc." Once compiled, such records could then be used to help children tailor their letters to their foster parents' personal backgrounds—and thereby better "educate and persuade" them.[711] However, largely because the PLAN China Branch closed only five months later, these "sponsor information records" were largely incomplete and never put to use. Several years later, many of the same staff members revived a similar version of this project at *China Reconstructs*. The *China Reconstructs* office translated reader letters into Chinese, categorized them by subject matter, and utilized them to produce regular reports analyzing international opinion on a variety of topics. Such reports were in turn used to inform the content and tone of future issues so as to influence global opinion of China more effectively.

In many cases, CWI reports optimistically confirmed that *China Reconstructs* was successfully portraying China's socialist development as a beacon of hope for people across the third world and within the Euro-American left. A couple of examples of reader letters excerpted in CWI reports are illuminating. One student from Uganda wrote in response to an article called "The Development of the People's Commune Movement," "To me this article was very inspiring, because it made me think that the African people can also do this if we also have the opportunity." An Indonesian reader replied to the article "Tibet's Bumper Harvest," "I was very happy to read about the situation in Tibet. I hope these poor, unfortunate people now can live a socialist life.

[711] C45-2-9-13, *SMA*.

This is what the selfless People's Liberation Army and the new social system have given them." These letters—and thousands more like them—confirmed to the CWI that *China Reconstructs* was helping to promote a positive image of China abroad.

Beyond collecting self-affirming praise, the CWI also utilized the letters it received from readers abroad to gauge opinion on contentions international issues. For example, in 1960, in the context of widespread anti-Chinese discrimination in Indonesia, *China Reconstructs* received numerous letters concerning China's policy of encouraging Chinese Indonesians to return to China. Based on these letters, the editors of *China Reconstructs* prepared an analysis of Chinese Indonesians' views on return migration. First, they noted that while laborers were the main targets of anti-Chinese sentiment in Indonesia, the great majority of letters inquiring about return migration were from "petit bourgeois intellectuals." Moreover, the report continued, "because these readers' economic status and political thinking are different from the main target of the anti-Chinese movement, their attitude toward the question of returning to the country also has differences." Specifically, "because they have been influenced by reactionary propaganda, they cannot but have doubts about family life under the socialist system and other matters." The report went on to list the specific questions regarding return migration that Chinese Indonesians raised in their letters:

> What to do if they do not understand Chinese? How much is the cost of living? Is income enough? Is it possible to shoulder the expenses of family members who cannot work? Can students continue their studies? Do wives work? What do they do? Who manages the housework? What is family life like? What are the real conditions on the communes? Is it true that husbands, wives, and children live separately?[712]

[712] C45-2-298, *SMA*.

Based on the understanding of prospective returnees gained through reader letters, *China Reconstructs* could adjust its coverage to address their concerns—and CWI could tailor its services for returning overseas Chinese accordingly.

In other cases, reader letters alerted the CWI to broad-based dissent against Chinese policies, even among the very friendly international audience represented by readers of *China Reconstructs*. One of the most controversial incidents among *China Reconstructs*' readers was the Sino-Indian border dispute surrounding the Aksai Chin plateau—an area claimed by India where China had recently constructed a road linking Xinjiang and Tibet. To be sure, some readers endorsed China's position as articulated through extensive coverage in *China Reconstructs*. One reader from Ceylon wrote, "I feel that China must peacefully maintain the current status and must not let the imperialist and reactionary faction peel off one inch of territory. Even one inch of Communist territory is still tied to the fate of the proletariat of the entire world." More disconcerting, however, was the volume of letters from across the world questioning China's position in the dispute. One reader from the Netherlands wrote, "I do not understand why China, as a peace-loving country, cannot let India have one 90,000-square-kilometer mountainous district…I am a good friend of the Chinese people. I hope that China can be a little more broad-minded. If you give a little territory to gain the good feeling of the Indian people it will be a great leap forward for world peace." The most critical letters came from India. One letter from an Indian reader described how the conflict had destroyed his faith in China:

> For a long time I have sincerely admired China and the Chinese people. All along I have read your magazine with deep interest and firm conviction. At the same time, I have felt pride in your many victories. We, the people of India, take you as a people of action who live for genuine peace. But your occupation of India, our homeland's sacred territory, has dispelled all of the value I placed on you in the past. What's even worse, you cleverly call those who have been invaded the "invaders." This not only destroys your reputation, it will make you into one of the few countries in the world with which any country that possesses some amount of reason and honesty will refuse to have relations.

While the CWI noted that the number letters expressing negative reactions to China's position on the border dispute with India had declined from 1959 to 1960, its reports warned of a major public relations problem in explaining China's stance to the rest of the world.[713]

Almost all of the key figures from the PLAN China Branch—including Song Qingling, Gerald Tannebaum, Lu Ping, Zou Lŭzhi, and Lin Debin—played crucial roles in making *China Reconstructs* into one of the most powerful tools for understanding and influencing international opinion of China. Distributed to more than 100 countries and reaching a peak circulation of more than 50,000 copies, *China Reconstructs* reached far more people than the PLAN China Branch's adoption plan. Rather than retreating from the mission of using personal stories and transnational letter-exchange to transform global attitudes toward China, the pioneers of "people's diplomacy" pivoted to the field of international propaganda, where they continued their work, albeit in a very different form, on an even greater scale.

International Propaganda and the Propaganda of Internationalism

While foreign-language magazines like *China Reconstructs* aimed to shape how the world viewed China, Chinese Communist leaders were equally concerned with shaping how its own citizens viewed the world. In addition to international propaganda, Mao-era China also witnessed the dramatic expansion of what I call the "propaganda of internationalism"—didactic essays, posters, plays, radio broadcasts, and other cultural productions that instructed domestic audiences on how to understand the Chinese revolution in global context. Within the propaganda of internationalism, film was an especially important medium. It was in this context

[713] C45-2-298, *SMA*.

that Gerald Tannebaum, the Baltimore-born former director of the PLAN China Branch, enjoyed an improbable career revival as one of the most famous foreign film stars in Mao's China.

Tannebaum was among a very small cohort of foreign actors who gained prominence playing foreign historical figures in some of the most iconic Chinese films of the 1950s and 1960s. While Tannebaum's transformation from humanitarian aid worker to film star may seem surprising, he had the voice (he had been a radio actor before joining the Army to serve in WWII) and the looks (an internal PLAN document described him as "very tall, very handsome, and very charming") of a leading man.[714] As film scholar Lü Xiaoming put it,

> Tannebaum was one of the few Westerners in modern Chinese history who remained in China after 1949. But unlike George Hatem or Rewi Alley, he had a background doing radio broadcasts; he was not a stranger to the arts and especially not to performance; and on top of that he cut quite an impressive figure. This made him into a unique candidate to play foreign characters in post-1949 Chinese films.[715]

Tannebaum also worked as a translator and voice actor creating dubbed English-language versions of Chinese films for international circulation. In 1959, he translated the narration of the ballet film *Lotus Lantern* (*bailian deng* 白蓮燈), the first Chinese film with narration dubbed in English. The next year, he was a lead voice actor in the first Chinese film to have its dialogue dubbed in English, an eponymously titled film about Nie Er, the composer of the "March of the Volunteers." In 1960 he also translated the highly popular animated film *Where is Mama?* (*xiao kedou zhao mama* 小蝌蚪找媽媽).[716] Tannebaum's work as an actor and translator in the film

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[714] "Staff History," Box 115, Folder 88, *FPP*.

[715] Lü Xiaoming 呂曉明, *Zhang Junxiang Zhuan* 張駿祥傳 [Biography of Zhang Junxiang] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 2010), 139.

[716] "Shanghai dianying yizhi chang guanyu ganxie tan ningbang tongzhi xiezhu yingyu ban *nie er* pian peiyin de han 上海電影譯制廠關於感謝譚寧邦同志協助英語版《聶耳》片配音的函" [Letter from the Shanghai Film Dubbing Studio Thanking Tannebaum for his Help Dubbing the English Version of *Nieh Erh*], July 15, 1960, C45-2-300-5, *SMA*; Wu Yigong 吳貽弓 (ed.), *Shanghai Dianying Zhi* 上海電影誌 [Encyclopedia of Shanghai Cinema] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999), 496-497.

industry linked international propaganda to the propaganda of internationalism, bringing films about the Sino-Western encounter to a domestic audience while also bringing classic Mao-era Chinese films to an international audience.

Ranging from scathing critiques of foreign imperialism to celebrations of internationalism, Tannebaum's filmography identified friends and enemies within the Sino-Western encounter, delineating the positions that Westerners could occupy within narratives of the Chinese revolution. Yet lurking beneath the surface of these historical propaganda films was a simple irony: films critiquing the privileged position of Westerners in Chinese society required elevating Westerners who had remained in China—often with few credentials beyond a white face—into bona fide film stars. For Tannebaum, whose long career as an American Army captain and humanitarian administrator in China deeply implicated him within the history his films portrayed, the line between actor and character was especially blurry. Tannebaum's film career provides a window into the contested processes through which Chinese authorities and the former humanitarian workers upon whom their propaganda work depended renegotiated the roles that foreigners could play within the ideological and social terrain of Mao-era China.

The sensitivity surrounding the privileged status of the Western actors who portrayed Western characters in Chinese films is well illustrated by the tension over Tannebaum's salary, lifestyle, and benefits. When Tannebaum began acting in 1958, the film industry was caught in the "ultra-left" fervor that accompanied the launch of Mao's Great Leap Forward. In this context, Tannebaum had little choice but to demonstrate his sincere commitment to egalitarianism by living exactly like his Chinese colleagues. The actress Qin Yi, who appeared with Tannebaum in the 1959 film *Lin Zexu*, recalled his Spartan lifestyle: "Mr. Tannebaum came and went every day on a bicycle, regardless of whether it was daytime or the black of night. He also ate the food in

our canteen. He never showed up late or left early from filming, and he was very obedient. Everyone had a good impression of him."[717] By the early 1960s, however, his status as one of very few well-established foreign actors in China enabled him to command increasingly plush benefits. While filming in Beijing, Tannebaum typically lived at the Beijing Friendship Hotel. One of the best hotels in China, it was also the headquarters for the Office of Foreign Expert Affairs, providing medical care above local standards and special recreational activities for its foreign residents. He was further granted a food stipend of 100 *yuan* per month and a transportation stipend of 6 *yuan* per day, enough to support a comfortable if not extravagant lifestyle.[718] At a moment when China was still suffering from the most devastating famine in history, and even comparatively well-off families in Beijing were subject to tight food rationing, Tannebaum's status as a foreign actor afforded him rare access to a life of material comfort.[719]

Nevertheless, Tannebaum's employers were also careful to avoid the impression that he received preferential treatment as a foreigner. In the mid-1960s, at the peak of his acting fame, Chinese authorities rejected several of Tannebaum's requests to obtain special privileges for his family members. For example, when Tannebaum's mother visited him in China in 1964, the *China Reconstructs* office refused to pay for her trip, informing him that as it was personal travel

[717] Qin Yi [秦怡], *Pao Long Tao* 跑龍套 [Playing a Bit Part] (Shanghai: Xue Lin Chubanshe, 1997), 121.

[718] "Bejing dianying zhipianchang guanyu tanningbang zai jing shenghuo anpai yu zhongguo fulihui jiaohuan yijian de han 北京電影製片廠關於譚寧邦在京生活安排與中國福利會交換意見的函" [Letter from the Beijing Film Studio to the China Welfare Institute Exchanging Opinions on Tannebaum's Living Arrangements in Beijing], June 27, 1962, C45-2-338-19, *SMA*.

[719] On the Great Leap famine see Yang Dali, *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change Since the Great Leap Famine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) and Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962* (New York: Walker & Co, 2010). For a compelling account of how one relatively well-off urban family in Beijing experienced the Great Leap Forward, see Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 50-65.

he would need to pay all of her expenses himself.[720] After returning to Shanghai that same year, Tannebaum was initially unable to have his wife, an actress named Chen Yuanchi, transferred back to Shanghai to resume work at the Shanghai People's Art Theatre, where her repeated "lifestyle mistakes" (perhaps related to her romance with a foreigner?) had apparently earned her numerous enemies.[721] While Tannebaum enjoyed benefits unavailable to almost all Chinese citizens, he could not be seen to obtain special favors for his family at will.

While the wrangling over Tannebaum's compensation reflected the ongoing renegotiation of the position foreigners occupied in Chinese society, the content of his films revealed the simultaneous renegotiation of the roles foreigners could play within popular narratives of Chinese history. Tannebaum's first prominent acting role was in the 1959 film *Lin Zexu*—a historical drama named after the nationalist hero who stood up to rapacious British merchants by commandeering their opium stock and flushing it into the sea. At the time arguably "the most important film made in the short history of the People's Republic," *Lin Zexu* was released in October 1959 in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the PRC, inspiring "a veritable avalanche of enthusiasm in state-controlled news dailies."[722] In one review, the prominent historian Zhang Kaiyuan commended the film for bringing "this glorious first page of modern Chinese history onto the silver screen, providing audiences with a profound

[720] Tannebaum was also informed that he could formally apply for a subsidy if paying for the trip was "truly difficult." "Zhongguo fulihui zhonguo jianshe guanyu tanningbang yaoqiu buzhu wenti de baogao 中國福利會中國建設關於譚寧邦要求補助問題的報告" [Report of the China Welfare Institute's *China Reconstructs* on the Issue of Tannebaum's Request for a Subsidy], March 31, 1964, C45-2-387-5, *SMA*.

[721] "Shanghai wenhuaju guanyu bu tongyi chen yuanqi hui shanghai renyi gongzuo de fuhan 上海文化局關於不同意陳元琪回上海人藝工作的復函" [Reply from the Shanghai Cultural Office Disagreeing with Chen Yuanqi Returning to Work at the Shanghai People's Art Theatre], Sept. 16, 1964, C45-2-337-21.

[722] Paul G. Pickowicz, "Zheng Junli, Complicity and the Cultural History of Socialist China, 1949-1976," *China Quarterly*, No. 188 (2006), 1060-1061.

patriotic education."[723] Tannebaum played the leading British opium dealer Lancelot Dent, a crudely racist imperialist who personified the greed and hubris of the British Empire. When warned of Lin's anti-opium campaign, Dent responds, "Is this Lin Zexu not Chinese? …If he's Chinese, then he's easy to handle."[724] Tannebaum's emergence as someone able to portray foreign historical villains on the silver screen marked a turning point in the propaganda of internationalism. Both due to a dearth of Western actors and the political risk of casting foreigners, before *Lin Zexu* "foreign actors virtually never appeared in Chinese films."[725] As a result, depictions of foreign imperialism were surprisingly rare in 1950s Chinese cinema. In the early 1960s, Tannebaum appeared in a number of films that disseminated a narrative of Chinese history in which Western men featured first and foremost as the villains of a shameful age of imperialist encroachment not overthrown until the Chinese Communist Revolution.

While Tannebaum depicted the opium dealer Lancelot Dent as an unapologetic imperialist, he delivered a rather different performance as a fictionalized U.S. general in the 1962 historical drama *After Armistice* (*tingzhan yihou* 停戰以後). The film depicts the Anping Incident of July 29, 1946, when three U.S. Marines were killed in a clash with CCP forces outside the town of Anping. It is now clear that members of the CCP's Eighth Route Army, acting without the prior knowledge of central authorities in Yan'an, ambushed a Marine patrol and then falsely claimed that U.S. forces had attacked first.[726] In the film, however, U.S. soldiers

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[723] Zhang Kaiyuan, "Aoshuang huayan lingnan zhi－ping lishi gushipian 'lin zexu' 傲霜花豔嶺南枝──評歷史故事片 《林則徐》" [The Beautiful Southern Flower that Braved the Frost—Reviewing the Historical Film *The Opium Wars*], Nov. 15, 1959, *Renmin Ribao,* 7.

[724] *Lin Zexu* 林則徐 [Lin Zexu]. Directed by Zheng Junli. Shanghai: Haiyan Diangying Zhipianchang, 1959.

[725] "Zheng Junli, Complicity and the Cultural History of Socialist China, 1949-1976," 1057.

[726] Xixiao Guo, "The Anticlimax of an Ill-Starred Sino-American Encounter," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2001), 218-225.

and their Chinese Nationalist accomplices launch an unprovoked attack on CCP forces and then systematically impede efforts to expose the truth by fabricating evidence that they had been ambushed. Tannebaum played "General Fielding," a fictionalized U.S. general roughly modeled on Walter S. Robertson, the U.S. Commissioner in Beijing charged with mediating peace talks between the Nationalists and Communists.[727] In contrast to the cartoonishly evil Dent, Fielding speaks passionately about his desire to help the Chinese people while secretly condoning attacks on the Chinese Communists who threaten Americans' economic privileges in China. In one bit of heavy-handed irony, Fielding is shown telling Nationalist and Communist representatives, "As an American peace envoy and friend of the Chinese people, it is my heartfelt wish that your two parties can cooperate well moving forward. This is the hope of the American government—and it is also my personal hope." After his speech, the film cuts immediately to a convoy of American soldiers launching a vicious attack on Communist forces. For Tannebaum, who had first come to China with the U.S. Army in the 1940s, the film may have felt uncomfortably close to an indictment of his own personal past. Nevertheless, the final scene of *After Armistice* reiterates the CCP position of distinguishing between the American people and their government. Fielding tells a Chinese Communist general named Gu Qing, "Please don't forget that we Americans will always be a friend to the Chinese people." General Gu retorts, "The American *people* are our friend, but your government has already become the chief culprit of China's civil war."[728] While primarily a critique of imperialism, the film leaves space for an "internationalism"

[727] Guo Ming, "Ye jianying yanzheng yingdui anping shijian 葉劍英嚴正應對安平事件" [Yan Jianying's Principled Response to the Anping Incident], *Hong Guangjiao* 紅廣角[Red Guangdong Perspectives], No. 2 (2012), 15-18.

[728] *Tingzhan yihou 停戰以後* [After Armistice]. Directed by Cheng Yinzhi. Beijing: Beijing Dianying Zhipianchang, 1962.

defined in part by the imagined support that ordinary people in imperialist countries retained for the Chinese revolution despite the "reactionary" politics of their governments.

The friendship between the Chinese people and "the people" of the capitalist West was a key tenet of Mao-era internationalism, but as of the early 1960s no actual "foreign friends" had been depicted in post-1949 Chinese film. Since the beginning of his acting career in 1958, Tannebaum had actively lobbied for the opportunity to play a positive foreign character, and he especially wanted to perform the role of Canadian doctor Norman Bethune, who remained by far the most beloved foreigner in modern Chinese history. Tannebaum apparently only agreed to his first role as Lancelot Dent in *Lin Zexu* on the condition that he would have the chance to play Bethune at some point in the future.[729] However, plans to create a film about Bethune's life were scuttled after Mao's wife Jiang Qing, in her capacity as Director of Film in the Central Propaganda Department, commented, "The Chinese people's life and struggle have not yet been filmed, why should we film the story of a foreigner?"[730] With his prospects for playing a positive character seemingly slim, in 1962 Tannebaum announced that he was "already tired" of portraying such "formulaic characters" and would no longer act in films.[731]

However, in 1963 the prominent director Zhang Junxiang received permission to commence filming his long-delayed plans for a biopic about Bethune, and he asked Tannebaum to play the eponymous role. After reviewing Zhang's script, which he praised as having "good structure, lively action, and outstanding characters," Tannebaum agreed to take the part.[732] A

[729] "Zheng Junli, Complicity and the Cultural History of Socialist China, 1949-1976," 1057.

[730] *Zhang Junxiang Zhuan*, 124

[731] *Zhang Junxiang Zhuan*, 139.

[732] Lü Xiaoming 吕曉明, "Xian wei ren zhi de 'bai qiu en daifu'" 鮮為人知的《白求恩大夫》" [The Unknown Story of *Dr. Bethune*], *Baokan huicui* 報刊薈萃 [Press Digest], No. 3 (2011), 44.

highly demanding director, Zhang was often harsh on Tannebaum (who, after all, was not a professionally trained actor). On some occasions, "Zhang Junxiang could not restrain himself from using Chinese to yell, 'You old foreigner, how can you be so dumb!' In fact, Tannebaum understood completely, but he could only obediently submit to the director's chiding, trying over and over again until the point when the director was satisfied."[733] In the end, all involved were impressed with Tannebaum's "energetic performance," which, in the words of one critic, "guaranteed the film's success."[734] But much to Zhang Junxiang and Tannebaum's dismay, after filming was completed in 1964, Jiang Qing again rejected the film for "prostrating before foreigners."[735] *Dr. Bethune* remained banned for another 13 years.[736] When the film was finally publicly released in China in 1977, it received an enormously positive response. *Dr. Bethune* was also widely screened internationally, including at the Pesaro Film Festival in Italy, to generally favorable reviews.[737] It was the first major Chinese film since 1949 "that presented a Caucasian protagonist in a sympathetic light."[738]

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[733] *Zhang Junxiang Zhuan*, 140.

[734] *Zhang Junxiang Zhuan*, 138.

[735] "Zuotan yingpian *Bai qiuen daifu* 座談影片《白求恩大夫》" [A discussion on the film *Dr. Bethune*], *Renmin Dianying* 人民電影 [People's Cinema], No. 11 (1977), 2-10.

[736] In November 1977, after the film's release, Zhang Junxiang published a lengthy open letter in the *People's Daily* in which he castigated Jiang Qing and the "Gang of Four" for banning the film and defended its fidelity to Mao Zedong's appraisal of Tannebaum's "selfless spirit" of communism and internationalism. Zhang Junxiang 張駿祥, "Guanyu yingpian *bai qiu en daifu* 關於影片《白求恩大夫》" [On the film *Dr. Bethune*], *Renmin ribao*, Nov. 4, 1977, 3.

[737] Jay Leyda, "China's Dr. Bethune," *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1978), 63-64. A review in the *Los Angeles Times* described the film as "sentimental, jingoistic and engaging." Linda Gross, "'Dr. Norman Bethune' Jingoistic, Engaging," March 11, 1982, *Los Angeles Times*, H3.

[738] Paul Pickowicz, *China on Film: A Century of Exploration, Confrontation, and Controversy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 232.

Tannebaum's performance as Norman Bethune reveals the extent to which "international propaganda" had replaced "revolutionary humanitarianism" as one of the only legitimate ways for a foreigner to prove his friendship for China. As a left-leaning humanitarian fundraiser who had long provided aid to Communist-friendly institutions, Tannebaum identified deeply with Bethune. Nevertheless, a comparison of their biographies reveals stark ironies. By 1939, Bethune had come to view his individual efforts treating Chinese soldiers on the front as inadequate, and he resolved to return to North America where he believed he could have greater impact by fundraising for a large-scale medical training program in the Communist-controlled base areas. He wrote, "I have come to the conclusion that I must leave the Region temporarily… and return to America to raise the guaranteed sum of $1,000 (gold) a month…How else can that money be raised except by wide-spread appeal of one such as myself who knows the needs of this region thoroughly?"[739] As depicted in the film, Bethune ultimately delayed his fundraising trip to return to the frontlines, where he died a martyr. The work that Bethune had concluded was the most important way for a foreigner to serve China—humanitarian fundraising—was precisely what Tannebaum spent his career doing. And yet it was exactly because Bethune died before he could shift his efforts toward fundraising that he could be celebrated as a selfless hero unsullied by the disgraced practice of asking imperialists for money. In contrast, Tannebaum remained largely anonymous throughout his humanitarian career and would ultimately be best remembered for portraying Bethune on film.

Dr. Bethune marked a significant departure from how Bethune had been celebrated in Chinese political discourse up to that point. Until the early 1950s, Bethune had been celebrated

[739] Norman Bethune, "Monthly Report of Canadian-American Mobile Operating Unit," Aug. 1, 1939, in Larry Hannant, ed., *The Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune's Writing and Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 350.

as a "revolutionary humanitarian" from whom all Chinese should learn (Chapter Four). In contrast, Zhang Junxiang's film was centrally concerned with how Bethune "changed his stance *from* humanitarianism *to* communism and internationalism."[740] At the level of plot, this was achieved by emphasizing not what Chinese Communists learned from Bethune, but rather what he learned from them. Upon his arrival in China, Bethune appears haughty and superior, harshly judging Chinese Communist medical workers for their lack of technical expertise. Over the course of the film, however, Bethune learns the "spirit of selflessness" from Chinese soldiers willing to suffer any hardship to serve the revolution. In one emotional scene, Bethune exclaims, "I've compromised too long with the enemy within myself." Then, switching into Chinese, he continues, "*Bangzhu wo, tongzhimen. Bangzhu wo*." "Help me, comrades. Help me."[741] By the film's end, Bethune has committed himself to transmitting the lessons he learned from Chinese soldiers to the world through his writing: "I want the world to know how the Eighth Route Army is resisting hundreds of thousands of crack Japanese troops with nothing but rifles and millet!"[742] Once a model humanitarian, Bethune had become a model propagandist. In part to refute Jiang Qing's earlier judgment that the film pandered to foreigners, critics repeatedly emphasized the point that Bethune learned the spirit of internationalism and communism from his Eighth Route Army comrades. Describing a farewell party at which Bethune thanks his Chinese comrades for teaching him to become a "true revolutionary warrior," one reviewer commented, "Where in all

[740] *Zhang Junxiang Zhuan*, 141. Emphasis added.

[741] In both *The Opium Wars* and *After Armistice*, the speech of all foreign actors, including Tannebaum, is dubbed over in Chinese by native speakers. In contrast, *Dr. Bethune* is subtitled, and Tannebaum speaks both English and Chinese in his role as Bethune. At the outset of the film, he speaks almost entirely in English, peppering in only a few poorly pronounced Chinese phrases. By the end of the film, however, Bethune speaks primarily in comfortable, if accented, Chinese. The film's depiction of Bethune's rapid acquisition of Chinese-language skills highlights its thematic focus on how Bethune was transformed by his experiences in China.

[742] *Baiqiuen Daifu* 白求恩大夫 [Dr. Norman Bethune]. Directed by Zhang Junxiang. Shanghai: Shanghai Dianying Zhipianchang, 1964.

this is there the least bit of a slavish mentality toward all things foreign? On the contrary, the film vividly embodies the spirit of internationalism and communism."[743]

Figure 5.3. Gerald Tannebaum starring as Norman Bethune in the film *Dr. Bethune* (1964). Tannebaum had an improbable second career as one of very few prominent foreign actors in Mao-era Chinese films.

At the same time as Tannebaum and his colleagues from the humanitarian sector were reinventing themselves as international propagandists, the once-glorified history of "revolutionary humanitarianism" was likewise being rewritten as the history of foreigners learning from and passing on the virtues of the Chinese revolution. In this new narrative, the historical significance of Bethune—and, by extension, other foreign humanitarians—was not so much that they helped China but that they *chose* China, affirming for a domestic audience the global appeal of their revolution. It feels fitting that Gerald Tannebaum played a defining role in popularizing this new narrative by portraying Bethune and other foreign characters on film. Tannebaum had dedicated his life to Chinese causes in relative anonymity, so perhaps it was some small consolation that when a generation of Chinese thought of the great hero Dr. Norman Bethune, it was Tannebaum's face they pictured.

[743] "Zuotan yingpian *bai qiuen daifu*," 6.

The Cultural Revolution and the End of Global Intimacy in Mao's China

For the first two decades of his career in China, Tannebaum had remained staunchly committed to the idea that the way to improve China's international relations was by building close relationships between individual Chinese citizens and people around the world. His portrayal of how Norman Bethune's political outlook was transformed by the intimate friendships he forged with Eighth Route Army soldiers on the frontlines strongly reaffirmed this belief in the political power of personal relationships that cross national, racial, and linguistic boundaries. For exactly this reason, *Dr. Bethune* was unacceptable to Cultural Revolution censors. The anti-American politics of the Korean War had long brought an end to the adoption plan in China, but the Cultural Revolution rendered *any* form of global intimacy suspect. Lasting from 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution was Mao's effort to reignite the revolutionary passions of the masses to expunge all capitalist elements from Chinese society, resulting in a decade of political turmoil.[744] This absolute insistence on class purity made all connections with the Capitalist West into counterrevolutionary acts. In this context, Tannebaum replaced his longtime focus on building transnational intimacy with a new effort to explain Maoist politics to foreign audiences through the impersonal language of abstract theory.

The Cultural Revolution shelved Tannebaum's most cherished film project for more than a decade, but that did not stop him from becoming one of the Cultural Revolution's most outspoken foreign champions. Beginning in 1965, Tannebaum began writing for the Hong Kong-based English-language magazine *Eastern Horizon*. Founded in 1960 and describing its target audience as "people in every part of the world [who] want eagerly to know more about

[744] For historical overviews of the Cultural Revolution, see Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) and Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

rapidly developing Asia with its divers peoples and cultures," *Eastern Horizon* was enthusiastically supportive of Bandung-style internationalism and the Cultural Revolution.[745] In his first article, "Impressions collected Over 40,000 Li," Tannebaum sought to establish his credentials as an authoritative commentator on China:

> In the past year, during the course of some film work, I had the opportunity to travel over 40,000 *li* (roughly 13,000 miles) throughout China. I was able to observe closely the Northeast and Northwest as well as North and South China, travelling by practically every means of conveyance—on foot, on horseback and cart, and by train, plane, and ship. Many of the places visited are rarely seen by foreigners. I penetrated into the rural areas, walked about the small towns and the big cities and talked with people on all levels and in all facets of life.

He concluded, "I feel certain, therefore, that what I saw was representative of conditions in the country as a whole. The economy is viable. The people are in the mood for new major advances and have already set out after them. In other words, China is booming!"[746] But rather than using *Eastern Horizon* as a platform from which to relay lessons learned from his personal encounters with diverse Chinese people during his travels, Tannebaum's articles adopted a social scientific tone that left no room for interpersonal relationships or affective ties.

The topics of Tannebaum's articles in *Eastern Horizon* ranged from primers on cultural life in Shanghai to the theoretical underpinnings of the Cultural Revolution. For example, at the outset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Tannebaum published a laudatory review of the ballet *Red Detachment of Women*, which would become the most internationally acclaimed of the "eight model operas" promoted by Jiang Qing as exemplars of revolutionary culture.[747] While such essays were highly predictable in their fulsome praise of officially sanctioned cultural

[745] Liu Pengju, "Eastern Diary," *Eastern Horizon*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1960), 5.

[746] Gerald Tannebaum, "Impressions Collected over 40,000 Li," *Eastern Horizon*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (1965), 7, 13.

[747] Gerald Tannebaum, "The New Ballet in China," *Eastern Horizon*, Vol. 4, No. 10 (1966), 7-19.

productions, they were nevertheless informed by Tannebaum's deep knowledge of the arts in contemporary China and enlivened by his closely observed descriptions of life in Shanghai. From 1967-1970, however, Tannebaum embarked on a very different writing project: a series of six essays that sought to explain and defend the Cultural Revolution for a global audience. In the first of these essays, "China's Cultural Revolution: Why It Had to Happen," Tannebaum's writing is mechanical and formulaic. Explaining the need for a Cultural Revolution, he argued, "The decisive element is that once the economic base has undergone a fundamental change, such as it had in China, the superstructure must follow course. If the base is new but the culture remains as of old, sooner or later it will subvert the base." He concluded the essay: "The thought of Mao Tse-tung is indeed a radiant star lighting the way forward for all mankind."[748] Published in 1969 after three years of mass violence and increasing international condemnation, the fourth essay in the series, "The Working Class Must Occupy the Superstructure!," doubled down on his defense of the Cultural Revolution:

> "The Cultural Revolution must be carried out to the end, otherwise revisionism will still be lurking in people's minds and in certain policies and regulations, thus always presenting the risk of a resurgence of capitalist orientation…Beyond question this is not the last cultural revolution nor the last struggle in the superstructure. It will be repeated many times because as long as classes and class contradictions exist, there will be class struggle and the struggle for the seizure of power."[749]

In these essays, the last Tannebaum wrote from China, all traces of the notion that international propaganda should be rooted in transnational interpersonal relationships have been eliminated. Two decades earlier, Tannebaum and the PLAN China Branch had cautioned children that Americans "do not easily accept empty sayings and slogans and on the contrary will feel an

[748] Gerald Tannebaum, "China's Cultural Revolution: Why It Had to Happen, "*Eastern Horizon*, Vol. 6, No. 11 (1967), 26, 32.

[749] Gerald Tannebaum, "The Working Class Must Occupy the Superstructure!," *Eastern Horizon*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1969), 22.

aversion to them."[750] As a leading international propagandist of the Cultural Revolution, he abandoned his own advice.

Conclusion

On August 17, 1971, 26 years after he arrived, Gerald Tannebaum left China, stopping over in Europe for several months before arriving in the United States early the next year. He was accompanied by his wife, Chen Yuanchi, who was widely reported to be the first private citizen from the People's Republic of China to receive a visa to immigrate to the United States.[751] At least as he explained it to the American press, Tannebaum left China not to escape the Cultural Revolution but, rather, to continue promoting it. In a profile in *Newsday,* Tannebaum explained that he and his wife returned to the United States "because we thought we could do more here than there" to "explain modern China to modern America."[752] Over the next few years, Tannebaum continued to write and speak tierelessly about Chinese society and politics, but he was able to reach a much broader and more influential audience. Rather than publishing in the small-circulation magazine *Eastern Horizon*, after returning to the United States he published frequent commentary in prestigious national publications such as the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times, Baltimore Sun,* and *Newsday*.[753] Tannebaum also regularly lectured about China at universities such as Yale and his alma mater Northwestern, and he

[750] *Wei Kunan ertong er gongzuo*, 16.

[751] Amei Wallach, "True Believers From the East," May 22, 1972, *Newsday*, 3A.

[752] "True Believers From the East."

[753] See, for example, "The President's Reception," Feb. 19 1972, *New York Times*, 31; "I Was an American in China—in the Years When It Wasn't Supposed to Exist," March 11 1974, *Los Angeles Times*; "China's Leadership: Mao and Chou Prepare Their Own Succession," July 14, 1974, *Baltimore Sun*, A8; "Health Care to Mao's People," May 18, 1975, *Newsday*, B7.

occasionally taught courses in Modern Chinese History at New York University and the University of Maryland.[754] He remained as committed as ever to "explaining China to the world."

However, in the months surrounding Nixon's 1972 trip to China to meet Mao, the symbolism of Tannebaum's marriage to Chen Yuanchi probably did more than his political commentary to shift ordinary Americans' views on China. Back in the United States, Tannebaum established his credibility on Chinese affairs by emphasizing not his academic knowledge or access to elite policymakers but his easy intimacy with ordinary Chinese people. In one typical article, he wrote of the apartment complex where he and Chen lived in Shanghai:

> Almost everyone in the apartment house called me Lao Tan. Tan is my Chinese surname, and lao, which means old, is a term of intimacy and friendliness. It was a sign that my relations with the neighbors were easy and informal, and there were few barriers between us…[T]here was practically no subject—even internal politics—that my neighbors and I did not discuss, affording me an unparalleled opportunity to get close to the people."[755]

While Tannebaum appealed to his close relationships with Chinese people to bolster his credibility as a commentator, Chen Yuanchi wrote frequently of her marriage to an American as a model for improved U.S.-China relations. Almost immediately after arriving in the United States to considerable press coverage, Chen published a lengthy essay in the *New York Times* titled "Why I Married an American," in which she wrote that it was Tannebaum's love for the Chinese people that inspired her love for him. She wrote, "It was the love and faith he had in the Chinese people that moved me. I never imagined a foreigner could be so devoted to another people's cause." And she held out the success of their relationship as evidence of the possibility of a transformed world order: "The fact that he was an American touched me even more because

[754] "Experts on Asia to be Speakers at Yale Affair," March 12, 1974, *Hartford Daily Courant*, 26; "Life 'Across the Seas' Topic of NU Lecture," March 14, 1973, *Chicago Defender*, 19; "Pekingology," May 20, 1975, *New York Times*, L37.

[755] "I Was an American in China—in the Years When It Wasn't Supposed to Exist."

this gave me, a Chinese citizen, the confidence that real friendship between the peoples of the world is possible."[756] In the context of Nixon's visit to China, Chen and Tannebaum's transnational marriage was widely lauded in American newspapers as "a symbol of the improved ties between China and the United States."[757]

At the moment of the United States' "opening to China," the love story of Gerald Tannebaum and Chen Yuanchi offered a compelling way to imagine how ordinary people could participate in healing the deep divide between these Cold War adversaries. On one level, the political significance attached to their marriage was a throwback to the early days of the revolution, when the PLAN China Branch sought to transform Americans' views of China, one "adoption" at a time. It was also a preview of things to come. Since the 1990s, the intimate relationships forged between Chinese citizens and people across the world—most prominently through transnational romance and international adoption—have again become highly contested issues through which China's role in the world order is renegotiated on a grassroots level.

[756] Chen Yuanchi, "Why I Married an American," Jan. 22, 1972, *New York Times,* 29.

[757] "Chinese Actress Receives Visa to Live in U.S.," Dec. 17, 1971, *Los Angeles Times*, E2. See also, "Actress Reflects Better Feelings of U.S.-China," *Hartford Courant*, Dec. 17, 1971, 40.

CONCLUSION

International Adoption and Global Intimacy in Contemporary China

It's the spring of 2016, and a new propaganda poster has appeared in subway stops across Beijing. As in public spaces throughout China, Beijing subway stations are densely plastered with moralizing and patriotic billboards exhorting riders to "Serve the People," "Rejuvenate the Nation," and "Emulate the Spirit of Lei Feng." But even in an urban landscape in which such billboards are so ubiquitous as barely to elicit a spare glance from hurried commuters, the new poster campaign stands out.[758] Released for China's first annual "National Security Education Day" on April 15, 2016, the poster is titled "Dangerous Love" (*weixian de aiqing* 危險的愛情), and it consists of a 16-panel cartoon illustrating the romance between a Chinese woman named Xiao Li and an auburn-haired man named David from an unspecified "foreign country." David meets Xiao Li at a party and tells her that he is living in China as a "visiting scholar." After Xiao Li informs him that she is a civil servant whose work involves compiling internal documents for use in central policymaking decisions, David pursues a romantic relationship with her. Smitten by David's flattering attention, Xiao Li agrees to let him see some of these "internal documents" for an academic article he is writing. Shortly thereafter, David makes off with the documents and is never heard from again. Finally, Xiao Li is apprehended by the Ministry of State Security, which informs her that David is a spy and that she has violated the law by giving him documents. The cartoon ends with Xiao Li crying, "I didn't know he was a spy! I've been used!"[759]

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[758] Didi Kristen Tatlow, "China's 'Dangerous Love' Campaign, Warning of Spies, Is Met with Shrugs," April 21, 2016, *New York Times*.

[759] "Weixian de Aiqing 危險的愛情" [Dangerous Love] (2016). Available at: https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/nsed/

It is difficult to imagine that posting this cartoon in Beijing subway stations did much to enhance China's national security. As one Beijinger commented when interviewed about the poster by a journalist for the *New York Times*, "How could ordinary people know anything about state secrets?" And certainly the Chinese state would not leave it to propaganda posters to inform government personnel with access to classified information about their legal obligations to maintain state secrets. Rather, the poster campaign served a more general function of fostering suspicion about the intentions of Western men pursuing romantic relationships with Chinese women—and of shaming Chinese women who date foreign men for their apparent lack of patriotism. The poster reveals that even after nearly four decades of "reform and opening up" had enabled Chinese people to form various kinds of intimate relationships with foreigners on a scale unprecedented in Chinese history, the Chinese state still views transnational romance as a highly gendered form of potentially subversive activity.

Such fears are not limited to China. The U.S. Government has also produced cautionary tales warning U.S. citizens travelling to China about the risks of forming relationships with secret government agents. Like many Americans who travel to China as researchers or on study abroad programs, before going to China to conduct dissertation research in 2016 I was asked to watch a film called *Game of Pawns* produced by the FBI's Counterintelligence Unit. The film is based on the true story of Glenn Duffie Shriver, an American who studied abroad in Shanghai as a college student and was eventually convicted of conspiracy to spy for China. As depicted in the film, while studying in Shanghai Shriver is befriended by a "pretty and smart" Chinese woman named Amanda who invites him to write paid articles on U.S.-China relations. In a neat inversion of the Chinese "Dangerous Love" story, Amanda works for the Chinese Ministry of State Security and gradually ropes Shriver into a scheme in which he will pursue employment

with the CIA in order to transfer classified materials to China.[760] Although based on a true story, the film traffics in Orientalist stereotypes and appears designed to leave Americans travelling to China skeptical of the motives of any Chinese seeking to pursue a close relationship.

The fear that transnational intimacies may subvert national interests has even been raised with regard to the highest levels of the U.S. Government. In what was widely praised as a triumph of investigative journalism, in June 2019 the *New York Times* published a lengthy investigation into the family finances of Elaine Chao, the Transportation Secretary in the Trump Administration, and her husband Mitch McConnell, the Republican Senate Majority Leader. The Chao family business, an American international shipping company called Foremost Group, conducts the vast majority of its business with China and enjoys unusually close ties to the Chinese government. The article suggests that McConnell and Chao's close ties to Foremost pose ethical issues, particularly since they have received tens of millions of dollars in gifts from the Chao family, who are also among McConnell's most important political donors. While the report raises legitimate concerns, the tenor of the article (as well as the heated commentary it produced) implies that having close familial or marital ties to China might compromise the ability of U.S. lawmakers and government officials to act purely in the national interest.[761]

Yet in stark contrast to the ways in which transnational romances between Chinese and Americans continue to conjure fears of spying and shady business dealings, the phenomenon of mass international adoption from China to the United States has largely been immune from such concerns. In part because of the presumed childhood innocence of the adoptees and

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[760] *Game of Pawns* (2013) is available on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8xlUNK4JHQ.

[761] Michael Forsythe and Eric Lipton, "For the Chao Family, Deep Ties to the World's 2 Largest Economies," June 2, 2019, *New York Times*; Michael Forsythe, Eric Lipton, Keith Bradsher, and Sui-Lee Wee, "A 'Bridge to China, and Her Family's Business, in the Trump Cabinet," June 2, 2019, *New York Times*.

humanitarian motives of the adopters, international adoption has been celebrated as an idealized form of transnational migration and a positive symbol of globalization. In the United States, international adoption is apparently such an innocent topic that when Donald Trump Jr. met with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer promising dirt on Hilary Clinton in June 2016, he initially claimed that the meeting was to discuss American adoption of Russian children.[762] Of course, it would be absurd to suggest that Chinese adoptees or their American adoptive parents pose a national security threat to either China or the United States. Nevertheless, international adoption from China today remains as deeply intertwined with international politics as the adoption plan was during the 1930s-1950s. And much like with the adoption plan, it is precisely because international adoption is often viewed as an apolitical act of humanitarian rescue that it can be so effectively mobilized in the service of Chinese political aims.

The Lucky Ones: American and Chinese Representations of International Adoption

Since the People's Republic of China began its international adoption program in 1992, China has consistently been the top "sending" country of children through international adoption. As of 2017, more than 150,000 children had been adopted internationally from China, with approximately 63% of them adopted by families in the United States. International adoption from China has also been highly gendered, with girls constituting approximately 90% of adoptees.[763] While international adoption from China peaked in 2005, when more than 14,000 Chinese children were adopted by foreign families, China continues to send a considerable

[762] Larry Buchanan and Karen Yourish, "The Russia Meeting at Trump Tower Was to Discuss Adoption. Then it Wasn't. How Accounts Have Shifted," Aug. 6, 2018, *New York Times*.

[763] *Outsourced Children*, 14.

number of children abroad through international adoption each year. In 2017, more than 2,200 children were internationally adopted from China—86% of them to the United States.[764]

In the United States, international adoption from China has generally been represented in a very positive light. Countless news articles and documentaries have depicted adoption from China as an ideal way of forming a multicultural family while also rescuing a Chinese girl from institutional care.[765] Nonprofit organizations such as Families with Children From China, which has branches all across North America, have also emerged to provide resources and public advocacy for adoptive families. A small cottage industry of children's books, including titles such as *The Red Thread: An Adoption Fairy Tale*, *I Love You Like Crazy Cakes*, and *When You Were Born in China*, portrays international adoption from China as a way of forming happy, global families and building affective bonds between China and the United States.[766] Even HBO's popular series *Sex and the City* positively depicts one of its main characters, Charlotte, adopting a Chinese baby girl.

But how has the spectacle of mass numbers of Chinese girls being adopted into primarily white American families been portrayed in China? In 1995, British filmmakers Brian Woods and Kate Blewett produced a documentary film called *The Dying Rooms* that sought to expose the inhumane conditions in China's state-run orphanages. Entering China on tourist visas and posing as visiting workers from an American orphanage, they secretly filmed conditions inside

[764] Peter Selman, "International Adoptions from the People's Republic of China, 1992-2017," Working Paper (2019), New Castle University, UK.

[765] See, for example, "Bringing Kids All the way Home," *Newsweek*, June 15, 1997; Andy Newman, "Journey from a Chinese Orphanage to a Jewish Rite of Passage," *New York Times*, March 8, 1997.

[766] Grace Lin, *The Red Thread: An Adoption Fairy Tale* (Chicago: Albert Whitman & Company, 2007); Rose Lewis and Jane Dyer, *I Love You Like Crazy Cakes* (Boston: Little, Brown And Company, 2000); Sara Dorow and Stephen Wunrow, *When You Were Born in China: A Memory Book for Children Adopted from China* (St. Paul: Yeong & Yeong Book Company, 1997). On the theme of the "red thread" in international adoption stories, see *Outsourced Children*, 12-13.

numerous orphanages, including so-called "dying rooms" where infant girls were left to perish. Widely seen and discussed across Britain and the United States, the film created the impression that untold numbers of baby girls, unwanted by their parents, were languishing in Chinese orphanages that callously neglected their well-being. *The Dying Rooms* played a significant role in galvanizing humanitarian interest in China's "lost girls" and coincided with a dramatic uptick in Chinese international adoption.[767] However, the film was met with outrage in China. Within months, the China Intercontinental Communication Center had released an English-language rebuttal film called *"The Dying Rooms": A Patchwork of Lies* that attempted to systematically debunk *The Dying Rooms* as a highly misleading portrait created by selective editing, decontextualized images, and outright fabrications. Interestingly, *A Patchwork of Lies* concludes by interviewing several Swedish couples that had internationally adopted children from China, all of whom reported that they had personally observed the good conditions in Chinese orphanages. The film's final frame shows a white couple holding two Chinese babies as the narrator intones: "The fabrications invented by Kate Blewett and her colleagues may deceive people for awhile but not for long. China has opened her doors to millions of foreign visitors every year. They all have the opportunity to witness the truth, which is a complete contradiction to what they have seen in the British TV program."[768] As the response to the *Dying Rooms* made clear, rather than view international adoption from China as embarrassing or shameful, Chinese authorities instead viewed it as an opportunity to mold global opinion of China.[769]

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[767] *The Dying Rooms* is available on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd_nptd2q0M.

[768] *"The Dying Rooms": A Patchwork of Lies* is available at: https://truevisiontv.com/films/details/57/the-dying-rooms-return-to-the-dying-rooms.

[769] For a brief discussion of the controversy over *The Dying Rooms*, see *Outsourced Children*, 10-12.

In fact, the rise of international adoption has also been portrayed positively in Chinese popular culture. As a recent example, the highly popular Chinese TV series *Ode to Joy* (*huanle song* 歡樂颂), which has been described as "China's answer to *Sex and the City*," depicts the contrasting fates of a Chinese woman named Andy, who was adopted by American parents, with that of her younger brother, Xiao Ming, a special needs child who was left behind in a Chinese orphanage.[770] While Andy becomes a precociously successful Wall Street executive, her brother remains institutionalized into adulthood. Although Xiao Ming is materially well provided for and loved by his caretakers, the show reinforces the perception that international adoption provides bright futures to Chinese children who would otherwise remain in institutional care. Despite offering some somber reflections on how differences of gender, ability, and citizenship shape the highly unequal life chances of children in a globalizing China, *Ode to Joy* ultimately depicts Andy as a poster child for the good fortune of Chinese adoptees in the United States. Chinese state-run newspapers have likewise covered international adoption in a mostly favorable light. For example, a 1999 *People's Daily* feature described in glitteringly positive terms the fate of a Chinese girl who had been adopted by a family in Maryland two years earlier: "Today she is already two-and-a-half years old and looks healthy and beautiful. She is the apple of her parents' eye…They even specially bought her one of the flower-embroidered dresses that Chinese children wear to celebrate the New Year."[771] One 2009 article went so far as to describe

[770] Zhang Xingjian, "TV Drama Ode to Joy Sparks Virginity Debate in China," *The Telegraph*, Sept. 27, 2017. The first two seasons of *Ode to Joy* are available on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wGpu56WQGQ&t=14s

[771] "Zhongguo haizi he meiguo fumu 中國孩子和美國父母" [Chinese Children and American Parents], *Renmin Ribao*, Feb. 17, 1999, 3.

international adoption as a contemporary manifestation of the ancient Chinese philosopher Mozi's philosophy of "universal love" (*jian ai* 兼愛).[772]

While there has been comparatively less academic interest in international adoption in China, scholars have nonetheless offered an optimistic assessment of the motives of foreign adopters and the benefits for adoptees. Nanjing University anthropologist Fan Ke has sympathetically described what he sees as the Christian humanitarian motives of those seeking to adopt from China: "[I]nfluenced by the Christian traditions of universal love and performing good works, many adopters view themselves as saving [girls] from an abyss of suffering. They think that the Chinese government's family planning policy and China's traditional concept of valuing boys more than girls has led to the abandonment of many infant girls, and that the people of the world should care for these children." Describing international adoption as "a bridge connecting mainstream American society with Chinese society," he has predicted that adoptees from China will soon play important roles in "American social and political life."[773]

In line with these positive depictions of international adoption in Chinese popular culture, newspapers, and academia, many ordinary Chinese people appear to view international adoption from China favorably. According to a survey of both urban and rural Chinese people's views of international adoption published in 2010, the majority of respondents "did not disapprove of foreigners adopting Chinese children" and generally considered international adoption to be a "positive trend." In particular, respondents believed that adopted Chinese children were "lucky" because of the good education, material comforts, and economic opportunities it was believed

[772] Jiao Xiang 焦翔, "Kuaguo de ai 跨國的愛" [Transnational Love], *Renmin Ribao*, Nov. 3, 2009, 13.

[773] Fan Ke 范可, "Kuaguo lingyang—dui meiguoren lingyang zhongguo yinghai ji xiangguan xianxiang de kaocha 跨國領養──對美國人領養中國嬰孩及相關現象的考察" [Transnational Adoption—An Examination of Americans Adopting Chinese Infants and Associated Phenomena], *Shijie Minzu* 世界民族 [World Ethno-National Studies], No. 3 (2004), 39-48.

they would enjoy in the United States. The study also notes that many respondents' held American adoptive parents in high regard and that some described international adoption as an act of "humanitarian rescue." A female teacher commented, "American parents show great internationalism by adopting Chinese children…Most of them show unselfish love to Chinese children, who seem to have their fate changed for the better overnight."[774] Sociologist Leslie Wang has written about encounters with Chinese parents who described the "good fortune" of international adoptees and even expressed a willingness to have their own daughters raised by American families as long as they could see them again in the future.[775] In short, while transnational romance can be a politically fraught topic within both China and the United States, international adoption remains a highly privileged form of global intimacy that is widely celebrated in mainstream Chinese and American society.

The Politics of International Adoption in China

The one-child policy occupies a prominent place in virtually all explanations of international adoption from China. Nevertheless, the role of the Chinese state in purposefully creating the conditions that led to large numbers of infant girls being relinquished to state-run orphanages where they become eligible for international adoption remains under-emphasized in both the popular and academic literature.[776] In the United States, adoption from China is often framed as a form of humanitarian rescue for "unwanted" Chinese girls. According to this

[774] Tony Xing Tan and Xiaohui Fan, "Chinese Views on International Adoption," in Debra Jacobs, Iris Chin Ponte, and Leslie Wang, eds., *From Home to Homeland: What Adoptive Families Need to Know Before Making a Return Trip to China* (St. Paul: Yeong & Yeong Book Company, 2010), 327-337.

[775] *Outsourced Children*, 71.

[776] The pioneering research of Kay Ann Johnson and Leslie Wang are important exceptions to this trend, and I rely heavily upon their work in the analysis that follows.

narrative, China's controversial one-child policy, in combination with a patriarchal Confucian culture that values sons over daughters, causes many Chinese families to abandon baby girls, who are fated to languish away in squalid state-run orphanages unless adopted into loving American homes.[777] To be sure, both the one-child policy and a cultural preference for sons are both crucial to explaining why so many girls have landed in state-run orphanages. However, this narrative obscures how the Chinese state deliberately manufactured the "need" for international adoption in the 1990s. Contrary to the popular belief within American adoption communities that international adoption is necessary because Chinese are not willing to adopt children outside the extended family, stranger adoption has been widely practiced in China since late imperial times (Chapter Two).[778] In the 1980s, domestic adoption increased dramatically along with stricter enforcement of the one-child policy—from an estimated 158,500 adoptions in 1980 to 562,000 adoptions in 1987, nearly 80% of them of girls.[779] A survey of nearly 800 Chinese adoptive families conducted in the late 1990s found that "adoption, viewed as a permanent and complete transfer of children into the adoptive family, was common in many rural areas, that it involved girls far more than boys, and that only a minority involved relatives or close

[777] For a critical analysis of this narrative, see Kay Ann Johnson, *China's Hidden Children: Abandonment, Adoption, and the Human Cost of the One-Child Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). For a more nuanced analysis of the gender politics of parenting in rural China, see also Johnson, *Wanting a Daughter Needing a Son: Abandonment, Adoption, and Orphanage Care in China* (St. Paul: Yeong and Yeong Book Company, 2004). On the origins of the one-child policy in China, see Susan Greenhalgh, *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[778] While the adoption of a male heir was sometimes seen as problematic because traditionally only male children from within the lineage coul perform the ancestral sacrifices, girls could be incorporated into the family without raising any such ritual concerns. *Outsourced Children*, 58. The most common form of adopting girls from outside the lineage in China prior to 1949 was adopting a "child bride" (*tongyangxi* 童養媳) to be raised within the family and eventually married to one of its sons after they came of age. See Arthur P. Wolf and Chieh-shan Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1854-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). The practice of taking *tongyangxi* was made illegal after 1949, and Kay Ann Johnson's research has confirmed that the practice had been all but eradicated by the 1990s.

[779] Sten Johansson and Ola Nygren, "The Missing Girls of China: A New Demographic Account," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1991), 35-41.

friends…In other words, many families were willing to adopt the abandoned female children of strangers."[780] Conditioned by the well-developed culture of adoption in China, domestic adoption was initially highly effective as an informal, grassroots solution to the problem of families that, in the context of harsh enforcement of the one-child policy, made the "coerced choice" to relinquish a daughter in the hopes of having a son.[781]

In the early 1990s, Chinese state authorities simultaneously suppressed domestic adoption and encouraged international adoption, creating the conditions for the rise of a large-scale international adoption program in the years to follow. China's 1991 National Adoption Law, well known for paving the way for international adoption, also imposed highly restrictive limitations on domestic adoption. Under the law, only childless couples over the age of 35 were eligible to adopt—an exceedingly small pool of people in rural China, where 35 remains a very advanced age to become a first-time parent.[782] While the vast majority of adoptions in China had always been unreported, strict enforcement of the new law increased the risks of informal adoption and predictably led to a greater number of children relinquished to state-run orphanages, where they were eligible for international adoption. Kay Ann Johnson has persuasively argued that the "creation of a pool of children available for international adoption was closely related to, if not wholly caused by, active government suppression of customary adoption practices."[783]

Why would the Chinese government deliberately suppress domestic adoption in favor of international adoption? As with the adoption plan in earlier decades, Chinese child welfare

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[780] Kay Ann Johnson, "Politics of International and Domestic Adoption in China," *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2002), 382-383.

[781] On the decision to relinquish daughters under China's one-child policy as a "coerced choice," see *China's Hidden Children*, 17-18.

[782] "Politics of Domestics of International and Domestic Adoption in China," 389.

[783] *China's Hidden Children*, 57.

institutions and state authorities viewed international adoption as a powerful tool through which to attract material and ideological support for their own political projects abroad. The most immediate reason for the Chinese state to favor international over domestic adoption was to help with rigid enforcement of its population policies. Authorities apparently worried that families were using domestic adoption to circumvent the one-child policy—either by giving up daughters for adoption in the hopes of having a son or by falsely "adopting" their own biological children. By making adopted children count against a family's birth quota under the one-child policy, the 1991 adoption law closed this "loophole" in family planning regulations.[784] In the ensuing years, many families were severely punished for the crime of adopting an abandoned child in violation of the one-child policy. Treating such adoptions as legally equivalent to over-quota births, state authorities levied fines that were often in excess of the adoptive family's annual income and even forced some adoptive mothers to undergo sterilization.[785] Partially in reaction to such extreme measures, the national adoption law was eventually revised in 1999 to exempt adoptions from social welfare institutions from counting against birth quotas as well as from some of the restrictions on eligibility to adopt.

Nevertheless, many child welfare institutions have continued to prefer international adoption because of the financial benefits it brings. In total, adopting a child from China typically costs between US$15,000 and US$ 30,000, approximately US$ 6,000 of which is given directly to the orphanage as a mandatory donation.[786] While the influx of funds through international adoption may seem miniscule in relation to the overall Chinese economy, the

[784] Nili Luo and David M. Smolin, "Intercountry Adoption and China: Emerging Questions and Developing Chinese Perspectives," *Cumberland Law Review* (Vol. 35, No. 3), 610-616.

[785] Kay Ann Johnson, Huang Banghan, and Wang Liyao, "Infant Abandonment and Adoption in China," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1998), 469-510.

[786] *Outsourced Children*, 14.

money received can be transformative for perpetually underfunded child welfare institutions. Numerous commentators have noted dramatically improved conditions in child welfare institutions since the opening to international adoption.[787] Nevertheless, these donations, which are typically only required of foreign adopters, create a strong incentive for child welfare institutions to channel children into international rather than domestic adoption. A 2006 study of 32 Chinese orphanages that regularly provide children for international adoption found that more than 80% informed prospective Chinese adopters (who met all the legal requirements) that they had no healthy babies available for adoption. Among the minority who did acknowledge having babies available for adoption, some demanded fees even higher than the donations required of foreigners—in effect creating a bidding war between local and foreign families for healthy Chinese babies.[788] These practices would seem to violate at least the spirit of the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect to Intercountry Adoption, which specifies that international adoption should be a last resort in the case that "a suitable family cannot be found in his or her State of origin."[789]

In the most extreme cases, the potential profits from international adoption have led to the creation of baby trafficking schemes. In 2005, news broke that the Hengyang Social Welfare Institute in Hunan Province had been buying babies from traffickers for years and selling them to orphanages that then put them up for international adoption. With each healthy infant girl guaranteed to bring in a large cash donation when adopted, there was plenty of money to go

[787] See, for example, "Intercountry Adoption and China," 603; "Politics of Domestic and International Adoption in China," 388.

[788] Brian Stuy, "Domestic Adoption in China's Orphanages" (2006). Available at: http://research-china.blogspot.com/2006/01/domestic-adoption-in-chinas-orphanages.html. See also *Outsourced Children*, 64-67.

[789] "Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption," May 29, 1993. The text of the convention is available at: https://assets.hcch.net/docs/77e12f23-d3dc-4851-8f0b-050f71a16947.pdf.

around: "Someone made money each time a baby changed hands. The mother of one trafficker said her son was paid $36 for each child he procured. The Hengyang orphanage paid between $400 and $588 a piece for the babies. Hengyang officials then sold the children to participating foreign adoption orphanages for $1,000 each." In total, the scheme generated at least US$ 1.5 million.[790] Traffickers apparently targeted the children of migrant workers from rural areas living in Chinese cities—as their vulnerable legal status makes them less likely to involve authorities and their lack of social connections makes them easier to ignore if they do.[791] It is difficult to know the extent of baby trafficking for international adoption in China, and those traffickers who have been caught have been punished severely by Chinese authorities. Nevertheless, it was China's policy of financially incentivizing international adoption that created the "demand" for healthy baby girls that made trafficking lucrative.

Beyond the direct transfer of money to Chinese orphanages via donations from foreign adoptive parents, international adoption from China has also inspired a vast influx of humanitarian expertise and resources into China. Since the rise of international adoption brought the plight of Chinese children to the back to the forefront of global humanitarian concern, both individual volunteers and foreign NGOs have once again devoted significant resources to saving China's children. Leslie Wang has divided these new global humanitarian institutions dedicated to helping Chinese children into three categories: 1) adoption related (e.g., Families with Children from China), 2) expatriate/overseas Chinese (e.g., Helping Hands), and 3) faith-based (e.g. Tomorrow's Children). Cumulatively, these organizations have infused vast quantities of money, technology, expertise, training, and volunteer labor into China's child welfare system. In

[790] "Patricia J. Meier & Xiaole Zhang, "Sold Into Adoption: The Hunan Baby Trafficking Scandal Exposes the Vulnerabilities in Chinese Adoptions to the United States," *Cumberland Law Review*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2008), 87-130.

[791] "Sold Into Adoption," 109-110.

doing so, they have both dramatically improved the quality of care for many institutionalized children and relieved the Chinese state from much of its responsibility to provide adequate child welfare resources on a permanent basis.[792]

Finally, international adoption is also a powerful means through which the Chinese state can obtain not only material resources but also positive publicity abroad. Organizations such as Families with Children from China host and fund a wide range of cultural events for adoptive families and the general public that promote a positive image of China and Chinese culture within the United States. Chinese newspapers have also reported on instances of the American parents of Chinese adoptees releasing public statements praising China's child welfare institutions and sending letters to the Chinese ambassador in Washington to complain about the "distorted" and "irresponsible" treatment of China in the American press.[793] According to Fan Ke, adoptive parents constitute a powerful constituency within American society that can counter negative media coverage of China: "After adopting a Chinese child, many American guardians begin to have a deeper understanding of China. For this reason, they often have their own views on the American media's reporting on China. After seeing some unfair or one-sided reporting, some people take up their pens and demand that those who work in the media maintain fair-minded professional integrity."[794] More recently, China has also begun facilitating subsidized

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[792] See *Outsourced Children*, especially 15-21, 76-99.

[793] Zhu Zhenguo 朱振國, "Lingyang zhongguo gu'er de meiguoren fabiao tanhua bochi xifang meijie bushi baodao 領養中國孤兒的美國人發表談話駁斥西方媒介不實報道" [Americans Who Have Adopted Chinese Orphans Issue Statement Refuting Western Media's False Reports], *Renmin Ribao*, March 11, 1997, 7; Huang Qing 黃晴, "Meiguo yixie jiating zhixin wo zhumei dashiguan dui waiqu zhongguo de baodao biaoshi fenkai 美國一些家庭致信我駐美大使館對歪曲中國的報道表示憤慨" [Some American Families Send Letters to our American Ambassador Expressing Indignation Over Reports Misrepresenting China], *Renmin Ribao*, Jan. 19, 1996, 7.

[794] Fan Ke 范可, "Kuaguo lingyang yu kua wenhua de 'jia'—yi laihua lingyang de meiguo gongmin weili 跨國領養與跨文化的'家'——以來華領養的美國公民為例" [Transnational Adoption and Transcultural "Family"—the case study of American Citizens who Adopt from China], *Huaqiao Huaren Lishi Yanjiu* 華僑華人歷史研究 [Overseas Chinese History Studies], No. 1 (2011), 9.

"heritage tours" for adoptees and their families to visit China and tour famous cultural heritage sites such as the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an and the Forbidden City in Beijing. However, such tours are highly stage-managed and sometimes even require visitors to sign a contract agreeing that they will not engage in unsupervised interactions with locals or invite locals to participate in tour activities. By carefully scripting how Chinese adoptees and their families experience China, the PRC has transformed homeland tours into yet another means of promoting a positive image of China abroad.[795] One study found that such tours "help not only children but also their adoptive parents to draw closer, meaningful connections to Chinese people, language, and culture."[796]

Since the early 1990s, international adoption has provided an effective way for the Chinese state to shore up its population policies, channel money and resources to child welfare institutions, and cultivate favorable views of China abroad. As Leslie Wang bluntly concluded, "as Western child-savers devote personal resources to caring for and rehabilitating the PRC's unwanted kids, they also bolster Chinese state authority through their willing participation in outsourced intimacy."[797] To be sure, the contemporary phenomenon of international adoption from China has many differences with the adoption plan of the 1930s-1950s. Most importantly, whereas the adoption plan involved sending money, letters, and gifts to children who remained in China, international adoption involves assuming full responsibility for them as parents. The level of financial, legal, and emotional commitment involved in international adoption is orders of magnitude greater. Nevertheless, from a Chinese perspective international adoption fulfills

[795] *Outsourced Children*, 73-75; 155-159.

[796] Iris Chin Ponte, Leslie Kim Wang & Serena Pen-Shian Fan, "Returning to China: The Experiences of Adopted Chinese Children and Their Parents," *Adoption Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 100 (2010), 117.

[797] *Outsourced Children*, 154.

many of the same functions as the adoption plan did in an earlier era. As the plight of Chinese children has once more become an international *cause célèbre*, the promise of an intimate, familial relationship with an individual child has again proven among the most effective strategies for attracting global humanitarian resources to China. With the backing of state authorities, Chinese child welfare institutions mobilize these emotional and economic ties between Chinese children and foreign adults to attract international support for their social welfare and political goals.

The End of An Era?

It appears as if the era of large-scale international adoption from China is slowly coming to a close. Roughly tracking global patterns, international adoption from China peaked in 2005 and has been steadily declining ever since. The reasons for this decline include decreasing rural poverty, the partial relaxation of restrictions on domestic adoption, and the recent shift to a nationwide "two-child policy"—all of which have decreased the number of healthy babies who are relinquished to orphanages and become available for adoption. Moreover, as China under Xi Jinping seeks to transform its image from "developing nation" to "global superpower," the large-scale "export" of baby girls through international adoption increasingly contradicts the image of strength and prosperity that China aims to project on the world stage. In the United States and Europe, a nationalist backlash against globalization has likewise called into question the ideals of multiculturalism and diversity that made transnational adoptive families into powerful symbols of an inclusive future. The end of international adoption may be imminent. But global politics will continue to shape how people forge intimate relationships across national, racial, and cultural boundaries—and those relationships will in turn continue to reshape global politics.

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